

TAM O' SHANTER'S KIRK

THE
LAND OF HEATHER.



WRITTEN AND
ILLUSTRATED BY
CLIFTON JOHNSON

Published by THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

New York *MCMIV*

LONDON: MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED

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MOUNT PLEASANT BRANCH

DA 866
J 66
1904

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

is hereby made to *The Outlook, The Interior, Good Housekeeping, The Congregationalist, The Pilgrim, The Era, The Household-Ledger, and The Springfield Republican*, in which periodicals several of the chapters included in this volume were first published.

*Electrotyped
and
Printed
at the
Norwood Press,
Norwood, Mass.,
September, 1903*

*Reprinted
December, 1903*

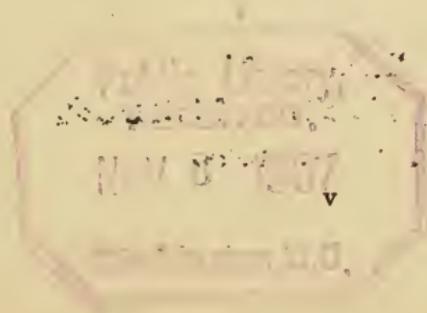
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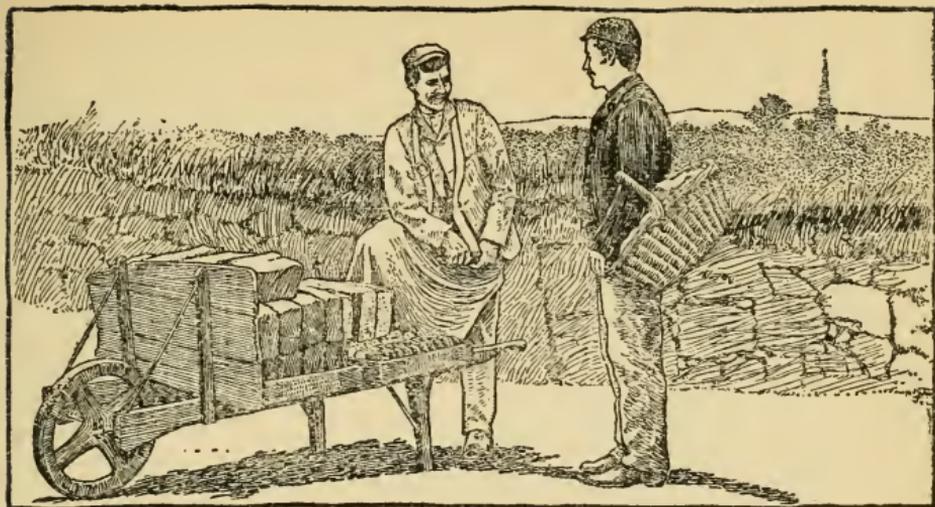
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A Chat on the Highway

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Setting up Blocks of Peat to Dry

Introductory Note

HEATHER is not peculiarly Scotch. It grows on the moors and waste lands of all parts of Britain and is found in most sections of the continent of Europe. But in Scotland it is omnipresent to an unusual degree, and, besides, it has become so closely associated in literature, both of fact and of fiction, with this particular country as to have acquired many synonymous attributes. The flowers are of a lilac-rose color, but vary much in depth of tint, thus adding materially to the beauty of the wilds which they delight to inhabit. The heather is in its glory in late August and early September, and one who sees it then would be apt to forget that it had any other mission than to delight the eye; yet it is not without its utilitarian aspect as well. The domestic bees find their richest feast of the year in its blossoms; the plants contribute much to the formation of peat; the shrubby growth makes admirable cover for the game birds, and is often used for thatching cottages, or is tied to handles for brooms and in bunches for scrubbing brushes; and still other uses might be mentioned.

Naturally one would expect the heather to be the Scotch national flower, and perhaps it might have been had not a chance incident conferred the distinction on the thistle. History says this choice was due to James III, who took the thistle to illustrate his royal motto, "In Defence"; but according to tradition the preference given the thistle dates back to the time when the Norsemen ravaged all the shores of northern Europe. On one occasion, in the dead of night, an invading Norse force approached unperceived the camp of the Scots who had gathered to oppose them. But while the Norsemen paused to ascertain the undefended points of the camp they proposed to assault, one of their spies stepped on a thistle, and the sudden pain brought forth a violent oath. This aroused the Scots, and they hastened to attack the invaders, gained a complete victory, and afterward adopted the plant which had been the means of delivery as their emblem. The thistle's thorny vigor perhaps very well expressed the Scotch character in those long-gone fighting days, but now the hardiness and warm bloom of the heather, to my mind, indicate more exactly the racial individuality.

CLIFTON JOHNSON.

THE LAND OF HEATHER

The Land of Heather

I

A RURAL HAMLET



His Favorite Grandchild

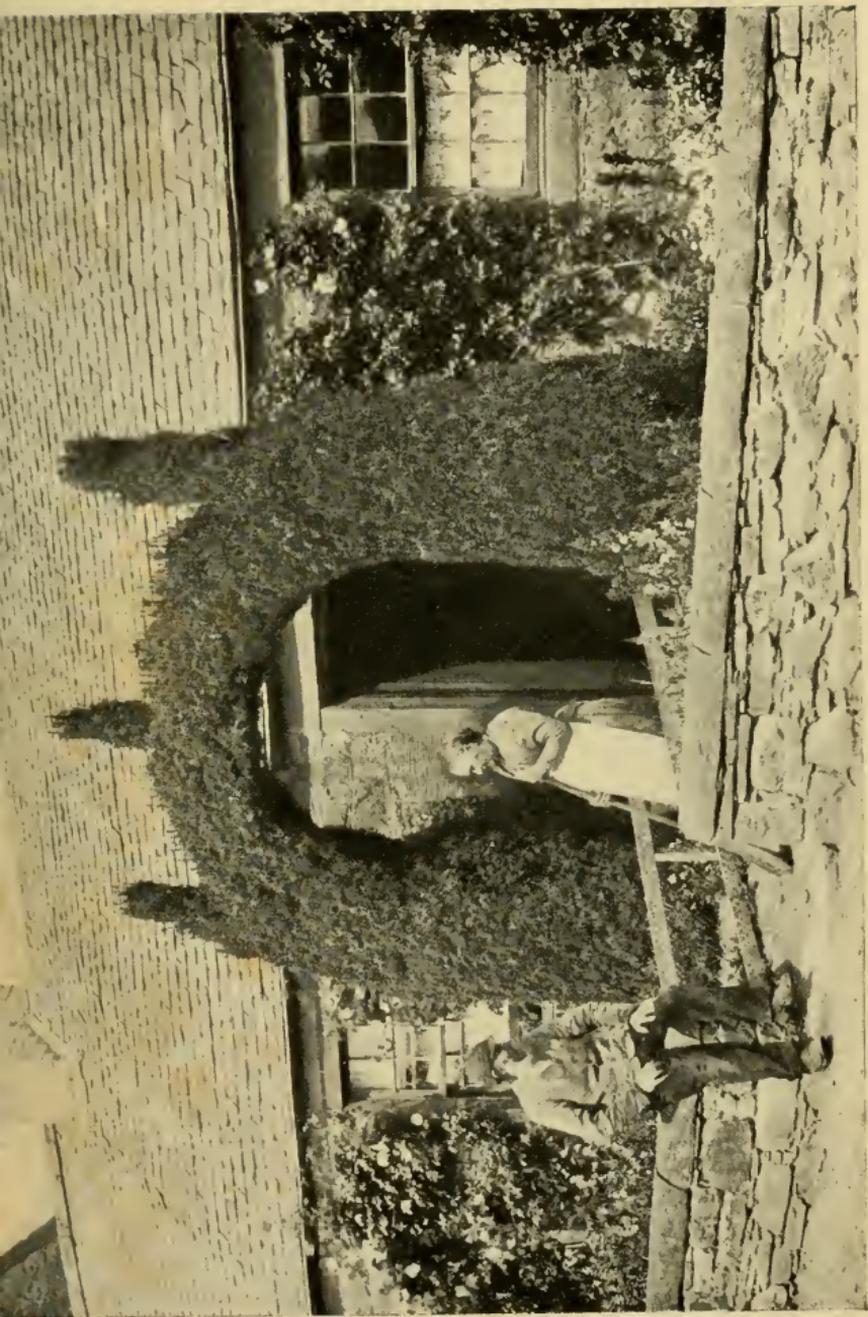
IN southern England the hawthorn hedges had shed their petals and taken on their summer greenness; but when I continued northward and crossed the vague boundary line which separates the two ancient kingdoms of the island, the hawthorn was in full bloom. This was reassuring, for I had been half

afraid I was too late to see the Scotch spring at its best; and the unexpectedness of the transition made these northern hedgerows, with their white flower-clusters and their delicate emerald leafage, seem doubly beautiful.

That I might lose nothing of Nature's charm in its early unfoldings of buds and greenery, I did not pause in any of the large towns, but kept on until I reached the secluded hamlet of Drumtochty, among the hills a few miles beyond Perth. There I made my home for several weeks in the cottage of the village shoemaker.

A wide-spreading farm and grazing district lay round about, and the Highlands were not far distant. Indeed, their outlying bulwarks were always in sight, rising in blue ridges that cut ragged lines into the sky along the north. Drumtochty, or "the clachan," as it was familiarly called by the natives, was the central village of the region. It was situated on a long slope, or "strath," that swept gently downward to where a sudden declivity marked the verge of a winding, half-wooded ravine, in the depths of which flowed a small river.

Aside from the clachan on the strath, habitations were much scattered. They consisted mostly of neighborless farmhouses, and a few lonely shepherds' cottages on the borders of the moors. In the midst of an imposing grove a mile or two from the village



THRESHOLD GOSSIP

stood the big decayed mansion of Logie House, reminiscent of days not very remote, when the district had its own local lairds ; but at present resident gentry were entirely lacking. There was, however, a shooting-lodge, at the head of a wild ravine up toward the hills, to which the aristocracy resorted in the season ; and I ought to mention Trinity College, on a high terrace, in plain sight from the clachan, just over the river, its brown walls and pinnacles rising above its environing trees, like some ancient castle. The college clock could be plainly heard when it tolled the hours, and the college bells made pleasant music chiming for evening service. But it was only by sight and sound that Trinity College had any connection with the life of the people who dwelt in its vicinity ; for while they were strenuous Presbyterians, the school was strictly Episcopal, and the pupils all came from a distance.

The low stone houses of the clachan were built in two parallel lines. One row fronted on the east and west highway. The other was behind the first, up the hill a few rods. The homes on the foremost row were just enough removed from the road to give space before each for a narrow plot of earth that the householders dug over with every return of spring and set out to flowers. Rose bushes in abundance clambered up about the windows and doorways, and several of the cottages had a pair of ornamental yew trees so trimmed and trained

as to arch the gate in the stone wall or picket fence which separated the flower-plots from the street. The people took great pride in their dooryard plants, and in all such adjuncts of the house-fronts as were constantly in the eyes of the critical public. The flowers were more especially the care of the women, but it was not uncommon to find the children and the men working among them ; and there was "Auld Robbie Rober'-son," now over eighty and living all alone, who kept the flower-beds that bordered his front walk as tidy as anybody. I stopped to speak with Auld Robbie one day while he was in his garden, pulling some grass out of a bunch of columbines—"Auld ladies' mutches" (caps), he called them. He was glad to tell me about his plants and blossoms, and when I started to go he picked a rose and presented it to me, first carefully removing all the leaves from the stem, that its beauty might be the more apparent.

The houses on the back row of the clachan were but little exposed to public view, and the approaches to them were often carelessly unkempt. The neat paths and flower-beds characteristic of the fronts of the more prominent row were here lacking. Grime and disorder had their own way. Perhaps this was because these houses had no back doors ; for their rear walls bordered a little lane and were wholly blank, save for now and then a diminutive window. Some place for

tubs, old rags, and rubbish was a necessity, and as the front door was the only entrance, odds and ends naturally gathered there.

Between the two rows of houses the land was checkered with little square gardens, and I found these at the time of my arrival crowded full of green, newly started vegetables. In some convenient nook of the gardens, next the hedges that enclosed them, was often a hive or two of bees. It was swarming-time, and almost any warm midday an incipient migration was liable to be discovered. Immediately arose a great commotion of noise and shoutings intended to distract the bees; and there was an excited running hither and thither to borrow a hive and get a certain ancient of the village, who was a bee expert, to help settle the swarm in its new home.

This bee expert, who was commonly spoken of as "The Auld Lad," comes hobbling into the garden where the bees, supposedly by virtue of the racket made, have delayed their flight and suspended themselves in a brown branch on a gooseberry bush or some other garden shrub. All the women and children of the vicinity gather at a safe distance and look on while the Auld Lad with apparent unconcern sets some stools covered with white cloths near the swarm. Then he puts the hive on the cloths and brushes the bees into it as if they were so much chaff. His face

is unprotected and his hands bare, and the crowd regard him as a sort of wizard in his dealings with the hot-handed insects; but he says it is nothing — bees do not care to sting at such a time.

Drumtochty had two shops. Each occupied one room in the owner's dwelling. The post-office was in the larger shop, but about all that was needful for official purposes was a desk, as the mail was delivered at the houses twice a day. Any community in Britain that receives an average of fifty letters a week is entitled to free delivery, and the people of the Drumtochty district were not so few or seclusive but that they did much more postal business than this minimum. The chief daily mail arrived at twelve, when a stout, heavy-shoed man in uniform would come tramping in from the west with a brown bag strapped over his shoulder and a cane in his hand. He enters the post-office and the mail is emptied from his bag and sorted on the little counter. The postmaster and all his family join in this task, and it is soon finished, and "Posty" with a new load goes trudging in his steady swing down the road. At the same time the postmaster's daughter shoulders a smaller bag, dons her straw hat, and starts out to distribute the mail through the clachan and for a mile and a half west among the farmers.

The sign over the door of the second of the village



A FAVORITE LOITERING PLACE

shops read thus: "R. Wallace, General Grocer, licensed to sell tea, tobacco, and snuff." The room in which these articles, together with "sweeties" and other small wares, were sold was tiny and much crowded. Near the door was a little counter with a pair of scales on it, and behind this counter presided Mrs. Wallace, the proprietor of the shop. She was a short, uneasy-looking body with a sharp tongue, and a long story of trials and wrongs and complaints which she retailed with the goods from her shelves to every customer. She had a remarkable propensity for keeping in hostilities with her neighbors, but always felt herself to be the innocent and injured party; and to any person who would listen she discoursed endlessly on others' blackness and her own immaculateness. In fact, these wordy outpourings made it so difficult for a customer to get away that many of the villagers avoided her shop altogether.

Until within a few years she and her husband had kept the village inn. They were turned out, according to her story, through a very wicked series of plottings, deceptions, and broken promises. Her husband's brothers were the chief villains in the affair, and it was understood that she lay awake nights hating them. The two dissenting ministers of the village were also objects of her antipathy. Both in preaching and in practice they were opposed to the use of spirits as a

beverage, and the things they had said about those who sold intoxicants were not at all to the liking of the lady of the shop. "They're a'ways meddlin'," she declared in tones full of venom, "and they'll preclaim frae the poopit aboot the weekedness o' the public (the grog shop); but I say, dinna they ken that in the Bible the publicans are aye ca'ed much better than the sinners?"

The public house of the clachan was on the back row. At noon, in the evening, and on holidays, there were many loiterers in its neighborhood, and the sound of boisterous laughing or singing was often heard from the taproom. Occasionally the merriment was increased and encouraged by the drone of a bagpipe. The inn stood near a narrow byway which connected the front row of the village with the back, and down this byway, drunken men frequently came staggering after too freely partaking of the wares of the publican. Sometimes a man would be so overcome when he reached the main road that he would throw himself down on the grass that bordered the wheel tracks and lie there for hours in tipsy stupor, while the rest of us who travelled that way passed by on the other side like the priest and Levite of old. These inert figures were most often stretched on the turf near the outskirts of the clachan, with the "U. P." (United Presbyterian) kirk looking gloomily down from just over the hedge.

The local "polis" had headquarters a mile down the road, and a lone policeman was often in the village, but he never interfered with a drunken man as long as he was moderately peaceable. If a man fell by the wayside, the polis let him lie there.

The U. P. Church was at the end of the front row of the village, and immediately behind it was the Free Kirk, at the end of the back row. Both were plain, small edifices of stone. The U. P. was entirely without ornament, but the Free had a tiny porch at the entrance, and up aloft on the peak was perched a little cupola with a bell in it, while at the rear of the edifice was a vestry. The diminutive size of this vestry made it seem as if it had been built for a joke. Here is Ian Maclaren's realistic description of it from "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush":—

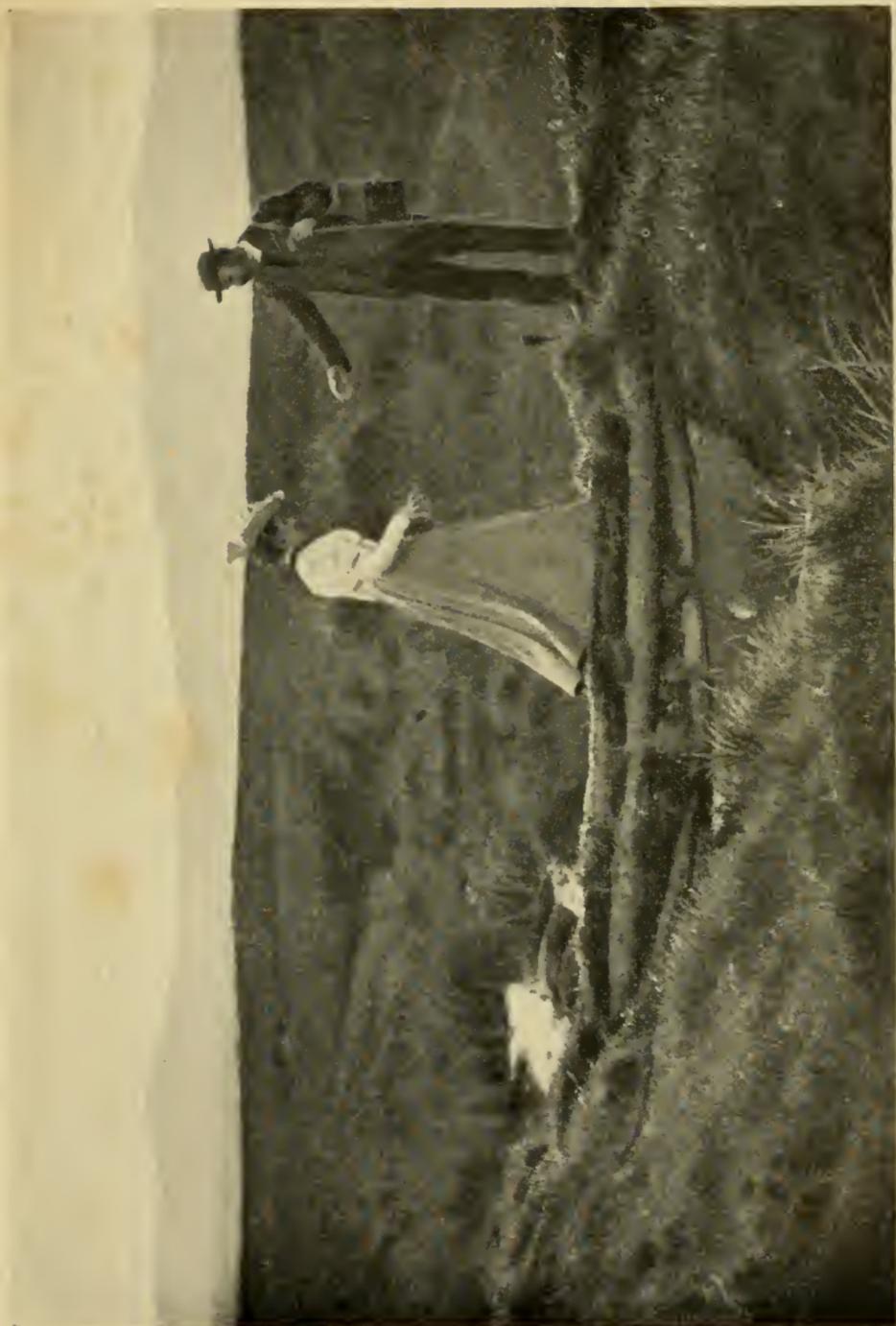
"The Free Kirk people were very proud of their vestry because it was reasonably supposed to be the smallest in Scotland. It was eight feet by eight, and consisted largely of two doors and a fireplace. Lockers on either side of the mantelpiece contained the church library, which abounded in the lives of the Scottish worthies, and was never lightly disturbed. Where there was neither grate nor door, a narrow board ran along the wall, on which it was a point of honor to seat the twelve deacons, who met once a month to raise the sustentation fund. Seating the court was a

work of art, and could only be achieved by the repression of the smaller men, who looked out from the loopholes of retreat, the projection of bigger men, on to their neighbors' knees. Netherton was always the twelfth man to arrive, and nothing could be done till he was safely settled. Only some six inches were reserved at the end of the bench, and he was a full sitter, but he had discovered a trick of sitting sideways and screwing his leg against the opposite wall, that secured the court as well as himself in their places, on the principle of a compressed spring. When this operation was completed, Burnbrae used to say to the minister, who sat in the middle on a cane chair before the tiniest of tables —

“ ‘ We’re fine and comfortable noo, Moderator, and ye can begin business as sune as ye like.’ ”

Ian Maclaren, or, to use his real name, the Rev. John Watson, was the minister of the Free Kirk in early life and lived in the adjoining manse, a substantial and pleasant house that in its situation is uncommonly favored ; for it turns its back to the village and looks down on a sweet little dell through which rambles a clear, pebbly brook. The view from the manse is extensive, and to the north the hills sweep up finely to dim ranges of the Grampians dreaming in the distance.

The Drumtochty folk esteemed Dr. Watson a very clever man, but they did not care much for his writ-



ON THE MOORLAND

ings, aside from the interest stirred by their purely local flavor. His descriptions of character, and the humor and the pathos, were largely lost on them. When the "Brier Bush" stories first appeared the U. P. minister in his delight over them read one of the most laughter-provoking chapters at a meeting of his elders. But the elders were perfectly imperturbable, and sat unmoved to the end. The minister did not repeat the experiment.

The inhabitants saw nothing of story interest about the region or about themselves; and if truth be told, any visitor who goes there expecting something extraordinary will be disappointed. Surrounding nature is by no means especially picturesque or beautiful, and life runs the usual course of labor, gossip, and small happenings. It is the author's skill that transforms all this in the books and makes ideal and heroic much that in the reality seems dull and commonplace to the uninspired observer.

One book character of whom I often heard was Dr. Leitch, who, a good deal modified, is the lovable Dr. Maclure of the "Brier Bush." He had been dead now a score of years, and I saw his grave among the others that huddled about the gray walls of the Established Kirk in the little parish burying-ground. But the doctor was never any hero to the Drumtochty folk. Their view was quite disparaging. He was a

picturesque figure, awkward and rudely clad, and his professional methods were as crude as his outward appearance. Still he was a fairly good doctor when you caught him sober. It was proverbial in Drumtochty that he was all right if his services were asked when, mounted on his white horse, he was riding east; but when he was returning west he was sure to have visited the public and was worse than no doctor at all. Often, on his way home, he was so exuberant with the "mountain dew" he had imbibed that he rode along like a mad man, swinging his hat on his stick and singing, "Scots wha ha'e wi' Wallace bled," at the top of his voice.

Of all the people who figure in Dr. Watson's narratives perhaps the one who was copied most faithfully from life is the guard of the Kildrummie train. Kildrummie, six miles distant from Drumtochty, is the nearest railway town. A short branch line extends to it from the main route that connects Perth with Crieff, and a single train runs back and forth between the town and the junction. This is pulled by a superannuated little engine which is said to sometimes fail on the up grade so that the passengers have to get out and push. The guard, or conductor, as we would call him, is the Peter Bruce of the "Brier Bush" stories to perfection, and every reader of the tales who journeys to Drumtochty recognizes him at

once and always calls him Peter, entirely independent of the fact that his real name is "Sandy" Walker. It was a pleasure to watch this gray little old man, he was so bustling and good-natured, and his eyes were so full of twinkle. He looked after the welfare of the passengers as attentively as if they were his children, and it seemed to come natural for him to get acquainted with all strangers and to find out their business the first time they rode on his train.

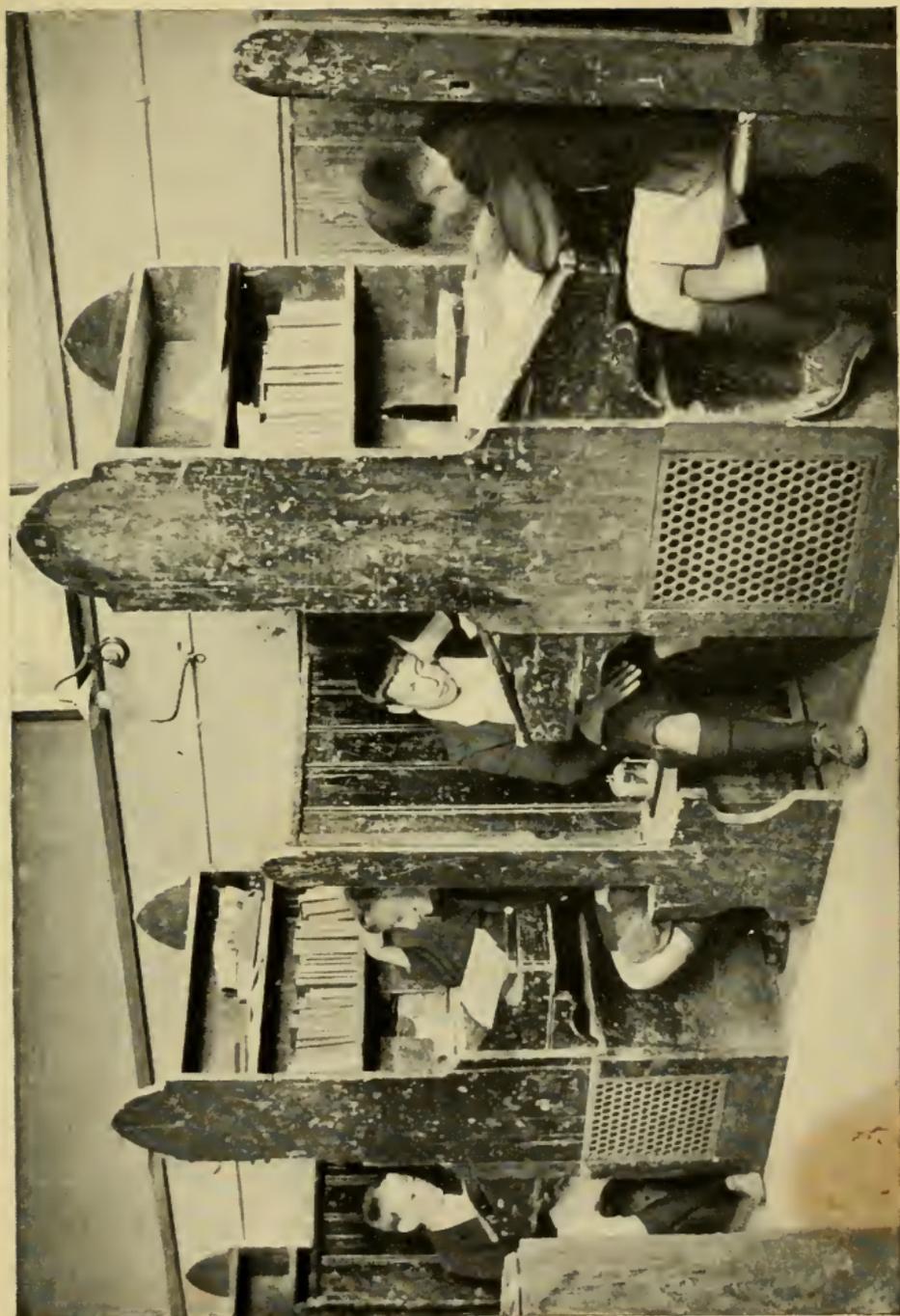
He always spoke as if he did not relish the notoriety the books brought him, yet I fancy his protests were mainly bluff. Probably it will be a long time before he sues Dr. Watson for "defamation of character," as he hinted was his intention. He did his best to correct romance by a relation of the actual circumstances.

"Oh, I ken Watson fine!" he said, "but thae books are two-thirds lees. The Drumtochty men were aye a drunken lot. It's a' very true about their stannin' aroon' on the Junction platform, but it wasna for the clatter that Watson tells aboot—it was because they was too drunk to know enough to get on the train. Mony's the time they had to be put on—pushed into their places like cattle, or lifted like bags o' grain."

No doubt Peter's trials with the stubborn farmers of the uplands made him take an extreme view of

their failings; but it was true that the Drumtochty folk were addicted to liquor beyond anything I am familiar with in rural America. Nearly all the farmers drank in moderation, and even a church elder could stagger after a visit to Perth without losing caste.

Yet whatever their lacks, past or present, one would have to travel far to find people more kindly and whole-souled. They make hospitality a fine art, and if you asked a favor, even of some old farmer in garments that would shame a scarecrow, it was sure to be granted with a courtesy that won your affection on the spot. Another attraction which the Drumtochtians possessed in common with all the Scotch was their peculiar patois. The burr was always present, and they never failed to roll their *r*'s, while a *ch* was sounded low in the throat in a way that made you wonder enviously how the children had ever caught the knack of pronouncing it. When reference was made to anything diminutive the ending *ie* or *y* was commonly added, and the word thus softened and caressed was very pleasant to the ear, and a decided improvement, I thought, over plain English. The only time I had any doubts about this extra syllable was when a woman spoke of her "Mary's little gravy," not meaning any portion of the family bill of fare, but the spot in the burial-place where lay a child she had lost.



A SCHOOLROOM CORNER IN DRUMTOCHTY COLLEGE

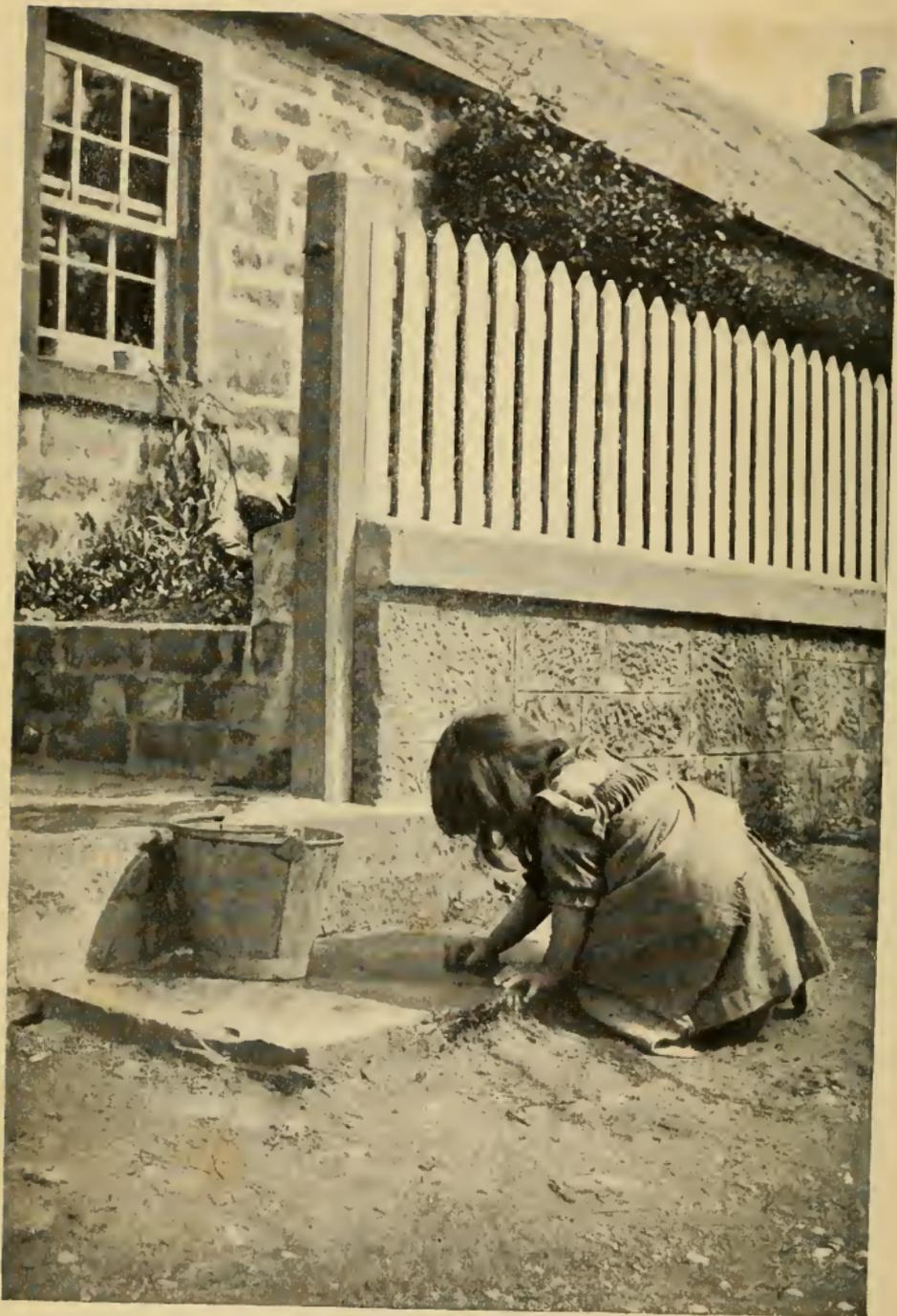
Perth was the commercial centre of the district, and business or pleasure, or more likely a combination of the two, took most of the people of Drumtochty there very frequently. The Kildrummie train was not the only public conveyance thither. Twice a week a short omnibus, or "brake" as it was called, made the journey, starting from Drumtochty in the early morning and returning the same evening. The round trip was twenty-two miles. It was not as tiresome as one might fancy — at least that was my experience on the only occasion I took advantage of the vehicle. I recall the return journey with most interest. The brake stood by the curbing on Perth's chief street ready to start when I climbed in. A moment later the driver came out from a near public, mounted to his seat and off we went.

But we had not gone far when a small boy in a tradesman's apron came shouting along the street after us with a great bundle in his arms. Other boys, nearer, took up the cry, and our driver became cognizant of the hubbub and halted until the lad came panting to the wagon side and passed up his bundle. Again we started, and again we were stopped almost immediately by a woman, who hailed us from the sidewalk. She climbed in, but pretty soon said she was in the wrong brake, and had the driver let her out. The horses had just begun to trot once more

when we heard a halloo in the far distance behind, and saw two women and a man hastening in our pursuit, all three laden with a great variety of parcels. We waited for them and they squeezed in, stowed what parcels they could under the seats, and handed the surplus to the driver to be packed away in front. Some of the passengers were in danger of finding their sittings cramped, but when the driver questioned them they always said they were fixed "fine," and everybody tried to make everybody else as comfortable as possible.

Thus we jogged on up and down the hills until we began to near our destination. Every now and then in this part of our journey one or more of the passengers would call to the driver, and he would pull in his horses and roll down from his seat to help them in alighting. This done, and the bundles handed out, he said, "Good night, and thank you kindly," and we were off once more. Often people on the watch would run out from wayside houses to get parcels brought by the driver or to meet friends, and sometimes a lone boy would be in waiting at the entrance to a lane that led away to a farmhouse. In the village itself there was quite a bustle of unloading, with half the inhabitants loitering in home doorways, or on the sidewalk, watching proceedings.

During my stay in Drumtochty hardly a day passed in which I did not get out for a walk, and I gradually



KATHIE SCRUBS THE FRONT WALK

explored all the region within tramping distance. I became familiar with the windings of the Tochty, as the river in the hollow was called, and knew where it was swift and stony, and where it was quiet and deep. I followed up the side ravines through damp woods and open fields. I climbed ragged, rocky gorges where were constant waterfalls sliding into dark pools — ideal lurking-places for the wary trout. I acquired the names of all the burns and of several lesser rivulets that the natives called burnies. It did not take me long to learn the village with its front row and back row, and its three or four narrow lanes, nor the main road for a number of miles east and west; but the byways and field paths, the farms and the outlying pasture lands, were not as easily conquered.

I often went up in the evening to the edge of a moor, a half-mile back on the strath. There I would linger till after sundown. This upland was perfectly treeless and stretched away in a boggy level to some low hills far off in the west. Occasional sheep picking about gave almost the only hint that the land was of any human use. Once I saw five brown deer grazing in the distance, but usually, except for the sheep, I had no company save the peewits and whaups (curlews) and other “muirfowl” which screamed and flapped about in the twilight, making great ado over my presence. The whaups were strange, large birds with long, bent

bills and a cry that was particularly harsh and wild, and the notes of all the muirfowl were uniformly forlorn and complaining. They were creatures of the barren wastes, and the sombreness of their surroundings had apparently driven out all music.

A crooked, faintly marked path crossed the muir to some farms in a glen on its farther side, and in the wettest places were stepping-stones to make the narrow footway more passable. It was not a path for a stranger to undertake, and at night it was dangerous even for one familiar with it; for the trail was so slight it was easily lost, and one might anywhere stumble into the old peat holes with their dark, treacherous pools lying like traps in waiting. Horny tangles of whins (furze) were frequent, still yellow with rusty remnants of their spring blossoms. Similar tangles of broom were also common, and seemingly were hardly different from the whins until you observed closely, when you saw that the broom was thornless, its growth looser and its flowers of a fresher yellow. The predominant plant on the muir was the heather. Much of the land was matted out of sight by the wiry little bushes, and it was these gave the landscape its predominant tone of dusky olive. Mingled with the common heather or "ling" was the bell heather, already in bloom and making brave attempts to brighten the sombre pasturage with its splashes of pink and red.

Flowers were abundant everywhere in Drumtochty, and I always returned from my walks with my hands full. I filled every vase in the shoemaker's house, much to the perturbation of my landlady, who thought a fancy for wild flowers very queer taste. If she had followed the promptings of her own sense of fitness, she would have thrown my untamed nosegays all out at the back door, and put stiff bouquets of garden flowers in their place. Among the rest of my gatherings I picked occasional sweet-odored wild hyacinths and the shy moor-violets. In favored places by the roadside I found ladies' delights, and along the stone walls tall, gaudy foxgloves and the humble "craws'-taes" and the delicate eyebright, or "cats'-een," as the children called it. Bordering the ditches and marshy hollows the forget-me-nots grew freely, sometimes making a blue mass that at a little distance was easily mistaken for a bit of quiet water reflecting the sky. The neglected ravines were gay with wild roses, some white, some red, and others of varying tints of pink; and in the same ravines a little later the straw-colored honeysuckle flowers tiptoed out from their green chambers and looked at their reflections in the streams they overhung.

One of the diversions of my walks was the glimpses I was sure to catch of the rabbits, or "moppies," to use the language of the Scotch children. They fed on

the edges of the woods and fields, and when they heard my footsteps, up they sat on their haunches, all alert to interrogate the nature and intents of the intruder, and then they went bobbing away in great terror to their holes in the banks along the hedges. They were such gentle, domestic little creatures, with their sensitive ears and stubby tails, and had such a soft, twinkling way of flying to cover when they took fright, that I always welcomed encounters with them, no matter how frequent.

Gulls were common at this season in the Drumtochty neighborhood, for it was their nesting time, and they had come inland to breed. They made their homes by hundreds in the reeds at the borders of a shallow pond a few miles up the valley. I saw their white wings flipping about at all hours of the day, and noticed them frequently feeding with "crows" in the newly ploughed fields. I often heard the skylarks singing in their aerial flights, and there were great numbers of other song-birds, many of them tame almost to the point of sociability. Their companionableness was evidenced most clearly by the way they would hop along the roadway and the hedges in my vicinity, and by their approaching to within arm's-length when I sat down in a woodland coppice or among the alders that fringed a streamside.

I perhaps ought to say before leaving this subject



“A WALL OF CROCKERY”

that my walks were not always an unmixed pleasure. There were times when the midges attacked me, and it was astonishing that such tiny creatures could be so irritating — “awfu’ wild little things” my landlady called them. They were so persistent and so hard to catch, and their bites were so discomfoting, that I concluded I would rather take my chances among our American mosquitoes. But the midges had one virtue the mosquitoes have not — they confined their operations to out-of-doors. There was the more reason for thankfulness in this because the houses usually furnished other creatures to battle with.

Among other places to which I was attracted in my rambles was Trinity College, across the Tochtý. It has a noble square of buildings, and looks as if it might have been transplanted from Cambridge or Oxford. To it come yearly several hundred sons of the gentry from all over the kingdom to prepare there for the universities. Their ages vary from eight to fifteen years, and to such youngsters the immediate surroundings of the college were, I thought, particularly attractive. The grounds themselves included wide sweeps of lawn that gave ample opportunities for games, and there was a shooting-range, and there were swimming holes conveniently near in the Tochtý, while the neighboring hills and dales, with their patches of woodland, their moors and trout brooks, offered many varied pleasures.

In what I saw of the college interior I was most impressed by an apartment set full of ancient battered desks that looked as if they had been suffering at the hands of youthful savages of the schoolroom from time immemorial. They were in truth so dark and grim as to be more suggestive of a penal institution than a modern school; yet both students and faculty are very proud of these desks. They take pains to show them to all visitors, and call attention to the fact that there are very few schools in Britain that can boast of anything older or more defaced by accumulated scratchings and carvings. The desks were heavy, rudely made affairs, standing back to back. On top rose a series of bookshelves which apparently separated the boy on one side from the lad who sat facing him on the other side very effectively. But closer observation showed that the boys always kept a friendly hole cut through the partition. In decided contrast with the desks were the modern electric lights with which the room was fitted. Pride in antiquity did not go to the length of studying by candle-light.

The students in their dress were quite unlike the local inhabitants of the district. On week days they went about hatless in all sorts of weather, and wore a very light costume that left the knees bare. In winter, too, hatless heads and bare knees were still the fashion, and frost and falling snow made no difference.

The boys discarded head-coverings to promote the growth of their hair, and the scantiness of their other apparel was imagined to assist them in acquiring an athletic toughness. But on Sundays there was a change. Then they wore chimney-pot hats and blue suits, with long trousers and Eton jackets, and they looked like grown men boiled down.

My home while in Drumtochty was, as I have mentioned, at the shoemaker's. The house was one of several joining walls in the front row of the village. It had four rooms. Of these I had the parlor and bedroom, while the shoemaker, with his wife and two children, occupied the kitchen and scullery. In a corner of the kitchen was a bed, and by the fireplace was a great, wide chair that could be opened out and made into a sort of crib. This chair-crib was pushed up beside the bed every night, for the use of the little girl, Cathie. Jamie, the boy, slept next door, at his grandmother's.

All the humbler village homes were like the shoemaker's, in having one or more beds in the kitchen. Often the bedsteads were simple modern frameworks of iron, but in many instances they were old-fashioned box-beds, more like cupboards or closets than beds. But the main feature of a kitchen was always a black fireplace, its lower half filled across by a "grate." This grate consisted of an oven on the right hand,

and a tank for hot water on the left, between which was an open space for the fire with bars across the front. Most of the cooking was done on griddles and in pots that were either set on the coals or hung over the blaze from the crane. To start the fire, dry twigs of broom, cut on the near braes (hillsides), were first put on, then a few sticks of kindling-wood added, and on top of all, some of the great lumps of soft coal that are used nearly everywhere in Britain. The broom, when it was touched off, made a very brisk and pleasant crackling, and the fire itself, as long as it burned, lent to the most commonplace apartment a relieving touch of cheerfulness. I greatly enjoyed my parlor fire, and on days of driving rain and chilling winds, often sat long before it, watching the dancing and beckoning of the rosy sprites released from the prisoning coals.

At the approach of mealtime my landlady would come in, put a white spread over the centre table, and set forth various dishes from the parlor cupboard. Then she brought from the kitchen the food she had prepared. I fared simply, yet always had what was good, and plenty of it. I liked to eat real Scotch foods, and I had bannocks and scones at every meal, and pancakes and kail-broth not unfrequently. Breakfast invariably began with a soup-plate full of the coarse oatmeal of the region, but I drew the line at

eating it without sugar, though my landlady assured me that the only proper way to eat it was with milk only. Nor could I quite reconcile myself to the Scotch butter. It has an individuality of its own, and when I first tried it I had the notion I was eating some new sort of cheese. But the trouble was that the butter was unsalted. The Scotch prefer it so, and even at fashionable hotels fresh butter is set before you, unless you request something different.

My meals at the shoemaker's were served very tidily, but this was not typical of the family meals in the other part of the house. I suppose the kitchen and little room behind it, known as the scullery, had to serve too many purposes to be very neat. They were crowded and disorderly, and it was a mystery how the housewife managed to get through all her work without coming to grief. The family had an exceedingly plain bill of fare, and they were very economical in the use of dishes. They rarely, if ever, ate together, but each one sat down when he or she found it convenient. The few eatables that made a meal were always close at hand, and it took only a moment to put them on the table. Cathie was the last to eat in the morning. She lay abed till after eight, and when she did get up she breakfasted in her nightgown. With her knees on a chair and her elbows on the bare boards of the kitchen table the trowsled little girl

would finish her plate of porridge and call out, "Maw, got my tea ready?"

She had to have tea with every meal, but her mother took care it should be very weak. After breakfast followed dressing and making ready for school, and then a mate would come to the door and both little girls would walk away up the road, hand in hand, each with a dinner bag strapped over her shoulder. In the home doorway stood Cathie's mother and watched the bairns till an intervening hedge hid them from sight.

The shoemaker ate with his hat on unless the occasion was one of those special times when company was present and the kitchen table had been made imposing with a white spread. But there was nothing peculiar about his keeping on his head-covering. Every Scot wears his "bonnet" in his own house. It is a sign that he is at home and not visiting. Some say the cap is the first thing he puts on when he gets out of bed in the morning and the last he takes off at night; and there are Scotch workmen in America who, having eaten supper bareheaded out of deference to the customs of the land of their adoption, will get their caps and wear them the rest of the evening, even if they stay indoors until they retire.

The scullery at my boarding-place was a nondescript room with many shelves along the walls and numbers of tubs, kettles, and odds and ends about the floor.

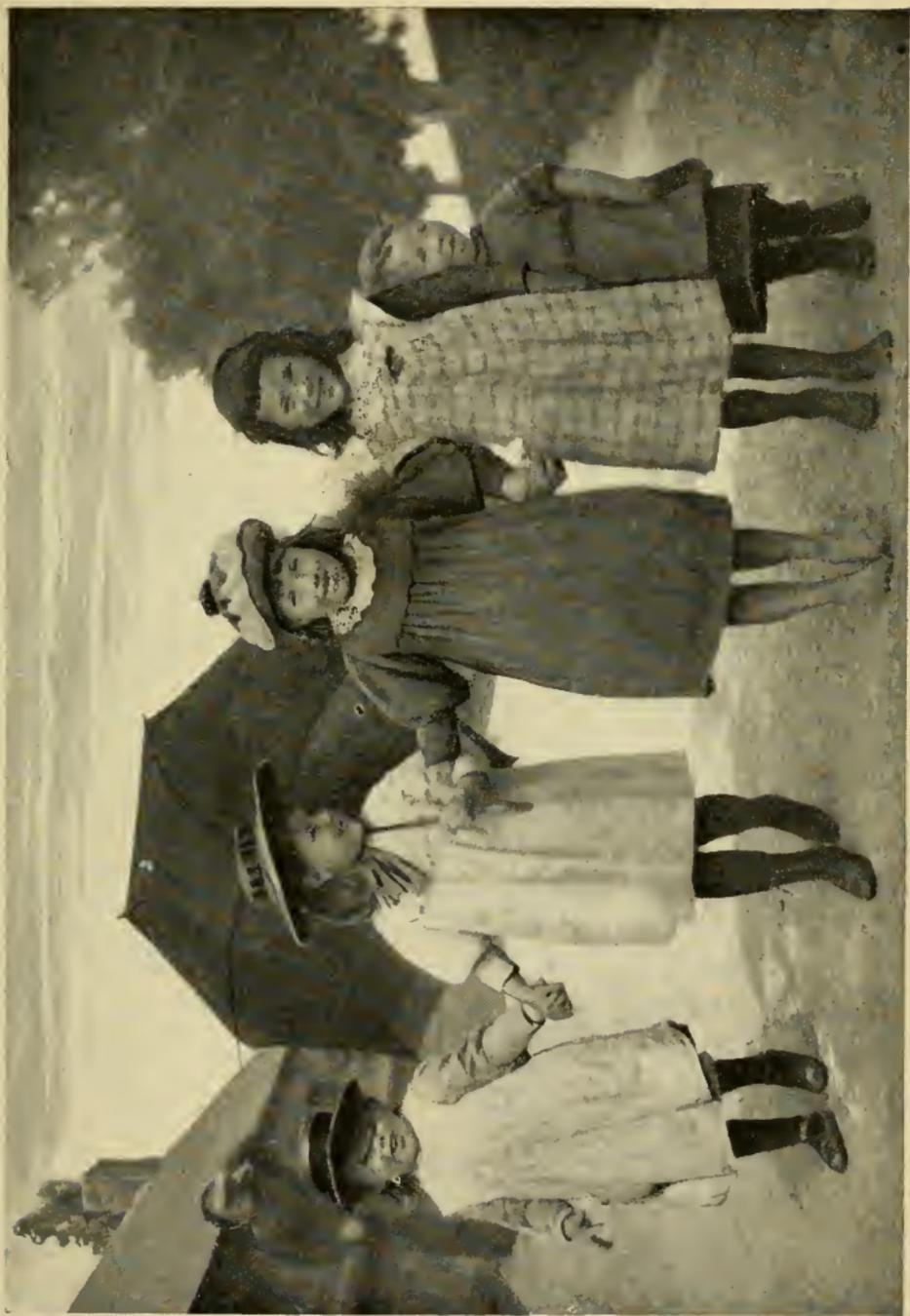
The back door was here, and just outside were pails to receive the refuse and dirty water of the household. These pails were carried up into the garden and emptied only when necessity compelled.

The kitchen was hardly less generously supplied with shelves and cupboards than the scullery. Prominent among these was the dresser, or "wall of crockery," opposite the fireplace. The lines of plates and cups and other decorated ware on the dresser, and the row of mugs pendent along a near beam, were kept in shining order if none of the other household furnishings were. I think the wall of crockery, the stiff best room, and the little patch of flowers at the front door were the three chief points of pride in most cottage homes.

The gardens between the two village rows were planted to tatties (potatoes), kail, cabbages, onions, peas, etc. In a sunny corner would be a bunch of enormous rhubarb with stems as thick as one's wrist and leaves a yard broad. Small fruits were represented by gooseberries, currants, strawberries, and "rasps." Often there was a cherry tree or two, and, more rarely, an apple tree. The most notable Drumtochty apple tree stood in the midst of the manse garden next the Free Kirk. This was a stunted, shrublike tree pruned down to about the height of a man. A record of its apples was carefully kept, and the minister was willing

to take his oath it had produced as many as 143 in a single season.

The shoemaker and his wife often worked together of an evening in their home garden. Cathie worked with them too, though her energies were mostly given to setting out in a neglected corner that she called her own various weeds and grasses that she had pulled up. Cathie was aged five. She was plump, red-cheeked, and good-natured, but with strangers was so shy she hardly let out a word, and she would drop her head the moment she caught any one looking at her. Among her companions or alone she was lively enough, and her tongue was capable of keeping on the trot all day long. Often she entertained herself by singing, and on a rainy day she would very likely play circus in the kitchen by the hour. She had seen a show at some time, and had taken a fancy to the tight-rope lady. So she would imagine herself in a spangled dress, lay a narrow board across two chairs and dance on that with an old cane for a balancing stick. She at first begged for a rope to tie between the bedstead and the table, but her mother thought it best she should begin more humbly. Occasionally, when another little girl came in on a dull day, the two would play the dambrod (checkers); but Cathie was not clever at that, and after she had been beaten two or three times her opponent would say to her, "I'll hae to tak' aff yer heid an'



VILLAGE BAIRNS

pit on a neep" (turnip), and then Cathie would refuse to play any more.

Drumtochty and the country for miles round about was owned by the Earl of Mansfield. He was one of the richest of Scotch landed proprietors, and his residence was at Scone Palace, near Perth. There was little liking for him among his tenantry, for he showed slight interest in their prosperity, and was quite content to see the farms degenerate into grazing moorland; and such was his partisanship for the Established Kirk, of which he was a supporting pillar, that he discriminated against dissenting tenants — at least this was common report. But the clachan on the strath, although it belonged to the Earl, was not wholly in his power. It was built on land leased for a term of ninety-nine years, and about a quarter of this time was still unexpired. Houses and churches, both, were built by the people, but all would be the Earl of Mansfield's unconditionally in twenty-six years. Nevertheless, there was no fear of any special severity; for, whatever might be a landlord's personal pleasure, he would not dare go against the public sentiment of the nation, and the dissenters will continue to have their kirks and their ministers.

The district had become the property of the Earl comparatively recently. For many generations previous it had been the domain of the Lairds of Logie,

whose ancient home still stands about a mile east of the village, not far from the Auld Kirk. In the early part of the last century Logie House had been a fine mansion with beautiful grounds surrounding. Now the place has gone to decay, and the great mansion is unoccupied save by an old woman and her daughter, who have two rooms in the second story. It is in a retired spot well back from the main road, in its old-time park, and the quiet is such that the wild rabbits feed fearlessly in the grassy roadway right before the grand front door. If you go inside you are shown through many lofty rooms, with wall and ceilings bare and stained, their frescoing and marble fireplaces cracked, and their high windows staring curtainless out on the trees and shrubbery of the park.

Back of Logie House is a still more ancient residence of the Lairds of the district, larger and much more ruinous. The roof is gone, the upper floors have fallen, the walls are crumbling; and grasses, rank weeds, bushes, and even good-sized trees grow in the old halls. I explored a secret hiding-place in a tower, where a winding stair crept up behind what had been a china closet, to a black pocket of a chamber above, and I went down into the gloomy passages and vaulted rooms of the cellar. Some of these underground rooms had grated windows, and were so dimly dark and damp that they were exact counterparts of the

traditional dungeon; and the whole ruin was enchanting in its suggestion of mysteries, ghosts, and the rough fighting days of centuries ago.

Logie House was perched high on a hill slope that commanded a long view down the winding valley of the Tochtly. In the wooded depths of the hollow could be caught glints of the stream, and on a quiet day you heard its far-off murmur. A footpath threaded through the woodland down the valley, most of the way keeping high up on the edge of a precipitous bank, with the river a hundred feet or so below. The trees along this path were very fine. They grew clean and large and tall — firs, larches, pines, lime trees, and graceful beeches. The evergreen woods were perhaps the most attractive of all, not so much in themselves, however, as in the fact that no matter how thick the trees were the ground beneath was very sure to be delicately carpeted with thin green grasses. This light undergrowth was very pleasant to the eye, without being heavy enough to appreciably obstruct one's footsteps. Another thing noticeable in the woods was the absence of dead leaves on the earth. The climate is so damp they soon mould and become a part of the soil. The effect of the dampness was further shown by the heavy moss which grew on tree trunks, shadowed fences, and decayed branches, and frequently was so pronounced as to be shaggy and pendent.

In a forest dell, two miles down the path in the valley of the Tocht, is a rough cairn of stones which marks the spot where dwelt long ago Bessie Bell and Mary Gray of the old ballad. It was a time of plague, and these two young women, daughters of the nobility, fled from their homes and built a woodland hut here.

“O Bessie Bell and Mary Gray,
They war twa bonny lasses !
They bigget a bower on yon burn-brae,
And theekit it o'er wi' rashes.”

In its seclusion they intended to live till the dangers of contagion were past. But their lovers presently sought them out, and unfortunately at the same time brought the plague with them. Both maids took the disease and died. After their death the attempt was made to take their bodies to the town. But when the bearers came to the ford in the river some distance below, the authorities, fearful that the plague would be spread, refused to allow them to cross. So Bessie Bell and Mary Gray were buried by the waterside near the ford, and now a weather-worn shaft of stone enclosed by a rusty, decrepit square of iron fence marks their grave. Close by is a second cairn of stone, which no doubt was piled up to mark the maidens' resting place long before the monument within the iron fence was erected. The great trees



LOGIE RUIN

tower up overhead and make the glade below very shadowy and quiet save for the unceasing ripple of the near stream; and the day I was there the stillness and wildness of the spot were accentuated by the appearance of a little mouse that crept in and out of the crannies of the stone heap.

As I was loitering along the path on my way back to Logie House I was overtaken by an old shepherd with a crook in his hands and a collie at his heels.

“It’s vera warum thae day,” he remarked by way of greeting.

The Drumtochty folk never said “Good morning,” or, “Good afternoon,” but instead made some comment on the weather, declaring it was warum, cauld, stormy, or whatever it happened to be at the moment. Their statements did not always seem very literal. For instance, “stormy” simply meant windy, while “rain” was a term only used to express the superlative. The drops might be falling thick and fast, and yet a man responding to a friend who had mentioned that it was “Shoorie like,” would be apt to say, “Ay, Tammas, but there’ll no be ony rain.”

A rain in Scotland means an all-day downpour. This kindly view of the weather was further illustrated by their calling any day “fair,” no matter how gloomily clouded the sky, so long as there was no actual precipitation. According to the shoemaker’s

wife, if on a threatening day the water drops had descended "to the roof o' the hoose and werena come doon to the ground yet, we wad say it was fair—fair, but a bit dull like."

The old shepherd showed an inclination to be sociable, and I kept on in his company. He said his age was eighty, but that he still kept at his work and walked many miles daily. Nearly all his long life had been spent in tramping the Drumtochty moorlands within a narrow radius of his home. But there had been one journey to the outside world that took him as far as the royal castle at Balmoral. He recalled this trip with peculiar pleasure and animation. He advised me that I must not fail to see the castle, too, and he would recommend that I should view it from a certain hill. Seen thence he declared it did look beautiful and "stood up juist as white and fine as a new-starched shirt."

On his visit to Balmoral the shepherd had seen a man who was making a tour of Scotland exhibiting his prowess as an archer, "and he was an Ameerican, like yoursel'," the shepherd explained — "a cannibal, aye, one o' them Injun fellers."

Then he told of one of his relatives who had lived in America and now had returned to his native Scotland, and who said that nothing could induce him to marry an American woman. Rather than that he

would "coom awa' hame and marry a tinker (gypsy), because thae Ameerican weemen's na strang. Their lungs gang awa' frae them."

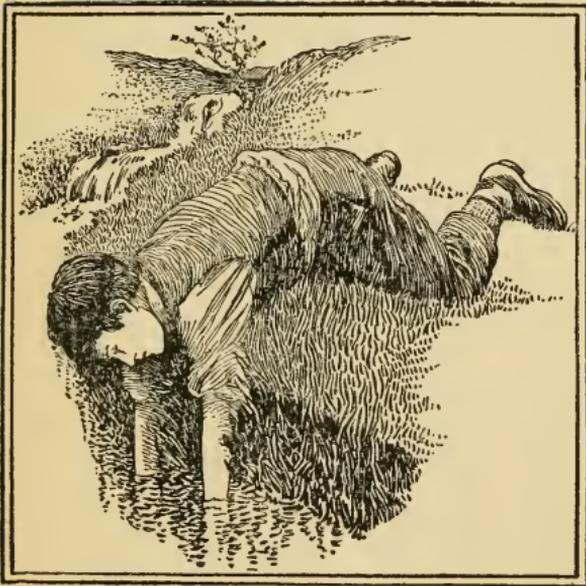
It was the shepherd's impression that we Americans still lived in the midst of the primeval forests, through which roamed all sorts of savage and ravenous beasts. He made particular inquiry about our American snakes, and said he had been told about a "sarpint" twelve feet long, and he understood that such "sarpints" crawled into our houses and under our beds!



Conducting her Coo to Pasture

II

VILLAGE HAPPENINGS



Guddling for Trout

IN a grass-plot at the borders of many of the Drumtochty gardens was a well that served for two or three neighboring families. It would be eight or ten feet deep, and was covered by a large flat stone that lay level with the

ground. This stone had a hole in the middle, fourteen or fifteen inches in diameter, and the hole was protected by a slab of wood. Water was drawn by means of a pail with a rope attached. I think I never saw a man drawing or carrying water except Auld Robbie Rober'son, who lived alone. It was woman's work. Every day I noticed several of the women

burdened with their pails pass my lodgings on their way home from a well next door. The husbands never thought of relieving their wives even when their own day's labor was over and they were sitting smoking their pipes and lazily visiting on the street walls. Nor did it apparently ever occur to the women that the task was otherwise than distinctly theirs. Its pre-ordained character was not, however, as clear to me, and one day I started to draw a pailful at the next-door well. "Granny," the shoemaker's mother, whose years were more than fourscore, caught me in the act, and came hurrying out from the house much shocked that I, a man, and a lodger at that, should attempt such a thing. She took the rope from me and insisted on doing the work herself.

Drawing water was not the only outdoor task which fell to the lot of the women. In several instances a village family owned a cow, and the housewife fed and milked it in the byre, and led it to and from pasture. The pig-pen, too, was included in the feminine sphere, and when it needed replenishing the woman thought nothing of walking off several miles and bringing home a small porker in a bag slung over her shoulder.

I observed that at many of the houses the weekly washing was done in the narrow hallways, no doubt owing to the overcrowded condition of the small kitchens; but not a few women preferred to make the

task an open-air one. In that case the tubs were set up at the back of the house, and near by a fire was started, and over it was hung the big black pot in which was heated a supply of water. The drying which followed the cleansing was sometimes accomplished by hanging the clothes on lines, but more often they were spread on the grass or trailed over the hedges. When the wash was taken in, the starched things were sorted out, while the rest—the towels, underwear, and sheets—were carefully folded and placed in a pile on the floor, and a cloth laid over them. On this pile the housewife stood while she ironed the starched goods, and by the time she had finished, the clothes beneath her feet were pressed so smooth that to iron them would have been superfluous.

June was the most notable month of the washerwomen's year, for that is the time of the "blanket-scouring." The work could be executed after a fashion indoors, but the approved Scotch method is to put the blankets in a tub and tramp them clean with bare feet, and it is essential that there should be plenty of water and likewise plenty of elbow-room. Therefore nearly every Drumtochty housewife seeks the burn in the Free Kirk hollow when she feels inspired to undertake the blanket-washing. Usually two neighbors combine in doing the work. A fire is built by the streamside, and a great pot of water is suspended over it. Later



A VILLAGE WELL

the women trundle down several tubs on their rude barrows, and return for the blankets, which they bring, loaded in great heaps on the barrows, with a generous supply of soap-bars on top. When everything is ready, the workers remove their shoes and stockings, step into the tubs, and tread and splash the soapy water about with great energy. This tub dance is kept up, with occasional intermissions to turn the blankets or add fresh water, until the blankets are thoroughly clean. Now follows wringing—a hand-twisting process in which two women work together. Then the blankets are spread on the grass to dry. The whole operation seemed to me curiously primitive, but by the Drumtochty folk it was considered the simplest, most natural, and best way to do such work that could be devised, and they asked me with wonder if we did not scour our blankets the same way in America.

One result of the outdoor toil which fell to the lot of the village mothers was that they often had to leave their children to take care of themselves. Even when the mothers were at home, the crowded inconvenience of the living rooms made the house interior a poor place for youthful amusement, and in fair weather the children for the most part sought the street.

The road was gritty macadam, hard on shoes and harder still on the toddlers' arms and shins, which the prevailing fashion in British infant garments left bare.

Conditions did not favor ideal cleanliness, and on days when they were not in school the children were apt to accumulate dirt in a way that would make a respectable pig ashamed of himself. The majority of them ran around barefooted and bareheaded, and often were on the street or about the fields from early morning till late evening. No doubt these long doses of outdoor air and sunshine added materially to their hardiness, for as a rule they were healthy and rosy-cheeked, and I wondered if there would not be more color in the cheeks of our American children if they were turned loose in something the same manner.

The Drumtochty children all hated to wear shoes, but there were certain of the parents who thought that an unshod child lacked a little of complete respectability. The shoemaker was one of these, and he told Jamie, greatly to the latter's grief, not to go barefoot to school. Jamie was in most ways faithful and obedient, but this was a trifle too much, and often he was no sooner out of sight of the house than he slipped off his shoes and hid them behind a dyke (stone wall). He would resume them when he returned from school in the afternoon, and thus things continued until one day he forgot where he had left them. He searched in vain, and had to come home barefoot. As a consequence his father laid down the law more strictly than ever, and Jamie appeared in school shod afterward.

For the mothers who lived in the front row of the village the roadway playground was very well situated. It was always under their eyes, and they were often stepping out to make sure the bairns were still in sight, and perhaps to order them in if they were getting unruly or quarrelsome. Sometimes the interference was for a lesser reason, as when my landlady, observing Cathie stand still and try to get something from beneath her clothing at the back of her neck, called out, "Coom here, Cathie, what's the maitter wi' ye?"

"There's soomthin' doon ma neik," replied the little girl.

"Then coom into the hoose this minute," commanded her mother. "It's like it's soom beast. I'll na hae ye pullin' at yer claes on the street."

Just as she was starting off with Cathie, she noticed a little fellow standing somewhat aside from the others, with a handkerchief bound about his face, and she paused to ask, "What's the maitter wi' your haid?"

"Ma haid's swulled wi' the buffets" (mumps), was the doleful reply.

"Coom, Cathie," exclaimed the shoemaker's wife, in greater trepidation than ever; "hurry, lass! Div ye no hear that? Buffets and beasts too! Ye maun stay indoors wi' me!"

A stile in the stone wall, across the road, was the

source of a good deal of pleasure to the younger children. No monkey ever got more enjoyment out of the perch in his cage, or went through more antics on it, than these little Scots did, on the stile opposite my window. When they tired of this, they swung on the limbs of the plane trees that grew along the wall, or they went for a ramble after flowers in the field beyond. Most of this field over the wall had been ridged for "neeps," but it was cut in twain by a deep ravine or "den" where grew thorny tangles of furze, and where, every June, countless wild-rose bushes outstretched their slender arms, piled high with blushing bloom. Indeed, the shrubbery and weeds grew so rankly that the depths of the den were quite choked and impassable. The children liked to roam around this ravine, and tumble on its sunny patches of grass, while they sorted their flowers, or busied their tongues with their small chatter; or, it may be, forgot all else in careering down a clay bank, where they had worn a smooth, slippery slide.

The upper edge of the den, on one side, was rimmed with a narrow path that led far down the brae, into the valley of the Tochtly. Near the stream, in an amphitheatre of grassy bluffs, was a bit of level meadow where the men of Drumtochtly were wont to play kites (quoits). Saturday was the great day for the game, as the final afternoon of the week is a holiday



WASHING BY THE BURNSIDE

among Scotch artisans and tradespeople, and a large part of the village men were then free to use their time as they pleased. I had the chance to see a match game one Saturday. It was between the local club of the clachan and that of the neighboring hamlet of Netheraird. The Netheraird team arrived in a brake at four o'clock and was taken at once up to the inn. The horses were put out, and the men all betook themselves to the bar, to get a dram. I was told that without a dram it was impossible for a kiter to play. After a liberal allowance of time for social chaffing and drinking at the public, the players went rambling over the stile opposite the shoemaker's, and on down the brae to the playground. The several circles of earth that were to serve as targets had already been prepared, and in the centre of each of these circles of freshly turned ground was an iron pin that barely projected into sight. The players, when they pitched their kites, aimed for that pin.

When they were ready to begin in earnest, the men got off their coats and vests, and groups of lookers-on gathered about each dirt goal. Others, less intent, lay down on the near bank, where thickets of broom spread away up the hill. At one time the threatening clouds rose darkly in the west, and we had a spatter of rain; but this did not in the least interrupt the game, and the shower quickly blew eastward and a

double rainbow came out of the disappearing storm. The players were matched in groups of four, two on a side, and each of the opponent couples had a coach. The coach was a man with a pencil in his hand, and his pockets full of paper slips on which to keep tally. But the slips were used mostly to guide the throwers. The coach sticks one up in the dirt right by the pin, and shouts out, "Div ye see that paper? That's your spot noo, lad. Be there for the life o' ye, Wullie!"

Wullie throws, and the coach, bending eagerly forward with his hands on his knees, thinks the kite is coming all right, and shouts, "I like ye!"

But the kite falls short, and the watcher jumps into the air and waves his arms distractedly and says, "Ahh!" as though it was his last gasp. "Ye're a fut too weak," he calls across the field. "Ye're lazy, mon."

The other side now has a turn, and Wullie's coach subsides into a watchful but calm spectator. Wullie, however, no sooner poises his ring for a cast than the coach springs forward, all on fire with eager intentness. He sets a fresh paper up in the dirt, puts his hands on each side of it to make the spot exact, and says: "Noo, Wullie, dirty that paper. There's plenty o' room here. Ye c'n dae it. Noo, be sure!"

The quoit comes flying through the air, and the

watcher leaps aside and makes a gesture of despair when it strikes the farther edge of the circle. "Aw," he cries, "ye're strang, mon — Oh, big a' thegither! For the love o' guidness, Wullie, pu' up!"

So the game goes on, each side as excited as if the fate of the nation depended on their winning. But the excitement was superlative only on the part of the coaches, for the players saved their energies for careful pitching of the rings. As for the onlookers, they were in the main quiet observers, most of the men judicially puffing at their pipes. No ladies were present. Women do not attend games in the Scotch country, and you see no one feminine either at quoits or at the favorite winter game of curling.

At the conclusion of the contest all the players went up to the inn, where the home club furnished a supper. The repast was simple — just cold meat, bread, cookies, and a mug of beer apiece. But this was only a preliminary. Treating was in order after the lunch had been disposed of, songs were called for, and the merry-making went on till the inn-closing time at ten o'clock.

Perhaps the most important public event I witnessed in Drumtochty was an evening political meeting in the schoolyard. When I arrived I found standing at the roadside, close by the playground fence, a van something like a very substantial gypsy wagon. It was painted in the gayest of colors, and its

name, "The Thistle," was conspicuous in fancy letters on its sides, while the British flag was flying from a pole hoisted on the front of the car, giving the conveyance an agreeable air of patriotism. In this van two men made their home and travelled through the country, months at a time, distilling wisdom among the rural folk all along their route. The horse that drew the van had been detached, and a platform had been let down over the shafts. The speakers, two stout, red-faced men, who looked like hearty eaters and hard drinkers, had descended from their domicile and were conversing with a knot of farmers.

After a little, one of the orators requested such of the audience as were loitering in the roadway or perched on adjoining stone walls to go into the playground, where a number of backless benches from the schoolroom were grouped to serve the assemblage for seats. There were thirty or forty of us in all, mostly men and boys, but including two women and a small girl. The meeting was rather an informal affair, and some of the listeners had pipes lit and continued to puff at them from beginning to end. First a chairman was elected, and the old farmer chosen stepped out, cane in hand, and made a few rambling remarks intended to be introductory. Then one of the red-faced men gave us a talk from the car platform over the dyke. He sympathized with the farmers, who,

he declared, were overtaxed, and he hoped and believed things would soon be remedied. The second speaker said the same at more or less length, and then took up the matter of disestablishing the Scotch church, which was a measure that he by no means approved. The audience had found the overtaxation talk interesting and much to its liking, but there were many dissenters present to whom the speaker's opposition to disestablishment was not palatable. Presently a man got up and said they wanted to hear about political matters—they hadn't come there to hear about the kirks. This led to some sharp bandying, with laughter and cheering from the audience. In the end the speaker went on in his own way, and at the close of his peroration there were votes of thanks all around, and applause, and promises on the part of the orators to come again in the autumn. I cannot say that I had been much impressed by their arguments, and I thought they were taken more seriously than they deserved. Their chief talent was a certain fluency and aptitude for talking in public. This saved them from dulness if it did not from shallowness, and I suppose what they said had some effect.

These political speechmakers were the aristocrats of the road, and probably would not acknowledge any kinship to the "tinkers," even when the latter travelled in vans of the same type as theirs. Not all tinkers

had vans, however, for the term "tinker" was used to include all persons without a fixed abode — gypsies, beggars, tramps, and pedlers. Of the many representatives of these humble knights of the highway who visited Drumtochty the gypsies were the best equipped and often carried a considerable amount of merchandise. I recall one van so hung over and piled up with basket-ware that hardly a glimpse was to be had of the original vehicle. The structure towered aloft in a most astonishing and topheavy manner. Its proprietor gave his energies to driving the horse, while his wife, loaded with various chairs and flower-stands and other trappings, went from house to house trying to make sales. A half-grown girl sat in the doorway of the car with a baby of three weeks in her arms, and several other children played around inside and out. I did not count these youngsters, but the man told me he had eight children in all. He said he travelled all over the island, and that he had a smaller cart that was following behind. I looked inside the van and found it crowded with shelves and cupboards, used for storage and sleeping space, with a few feet reserved in one corner for a small open fireplace.

Often two or three of the tinkers known as "pack folk" would pass through the place in a single day. They carried their personal belongings and stock in trade on their backs, and I heard the village postmaster



THE LADDIES PLAYING 'LINKS' IN THE SCHOOLYARD

in a moment of humor refer to them as "commercial trivellers." At best they were considered a nuisance, and at worst, when they were coarse and drunken, it was decidedly unpleasant to find them within one's home gate. A man tramp was likely to have a powerful odor of whiskey about him, and ten to one the drink had made him the tramp he was. Late in the day he, with his pack and an empty bottle, was very apt to be found lying by the roadside dead drunk. He might even spend the night there in the ditch.

The line separating pedlers from beggars was a very indistinct one, and the latter usually made some pretence of having the vocation of the former, for begging pure and simple is unlawful. The women were the most inveterate of the beggars. They never lacked a pitiful tale to tell, and they had a whining, decrepit way at the door, not much in keeping with the vigor one would fancy was required for the amount of walking they did. In many instances the female tinker had a baby in her arms, half supported from her shoulders by a shawl that was wound around both her and the child. Besides the baby she would carry a bundle in one hand and a heavy basket on her back, that in part at least contained goods for sale. Yet she does not thus burden herself so much in the hope of profit as to keep within the letter of the law, and though she goes through the form of attempting to trade at each

house, it is only by way of preface to her requests for "a drawing of tea," a bite to eat, and a charitable penny or bit of silver. Certain of the men tramps dispensed with the packs of notions altogether and lived by their wits; but none of the tinkers was accounted especially dangerous or dishonest. Still, "ye maun keep an eye open the whiles they're aroon."

One "gaein' about body" with whom I talked was a dirty old woman who greeted me one day from a wayside heap of road metal (broken stone) on which she was resting. She had been carrying a big bundle strapped to her shoulders, but had loosened it for the moment. In addition she had with her a dangling bunch of rabbit skins that she had taken in exchange trades with farmers' wives. A wretched specimen of a shoe lay in her lap, and I noticed that one of her feet had no covering save a frayed stocking. She explained that the shoe was burst out and would keep slipping off, and it was easier to take it along in her hand than it was to wear it. She said she was only four weeks out of the poorhouse, where she had been laid up all winter with her liver. She was hardly able to get about, but she would rather do almost anything than bide in the workhouse; so she was trying to earn a few pennies peddling with her pack. She had seven children. Some were in Australia, some in South Africa, and one in America, and there was another, a son, who



QUOITS — A DISPUTE

had been "misfortunit, and had to run awa'," and she did not know where he was. A daughter had married well and was living in Aberdeen, and the daughter knew her mother's need, and so did some of the other children, but none of them offered her help, and she would rather die than ask it of them. She heaved a sigh, gave her nose a dight (wipe), took up the rabbit skins, and shifted her bundle up to her shoulders. Then she rose stiffly from the stone heap, and I watched her melancholy figure hobble away down the road.

Another tramp who interested me was a tall man with a touch of the dandy in the tilt of his hat and the curl of his long mustache. He said he was a clock-maker, and that he had been a soldier. He pulled back his sleeve and showed an arm covered with blue tattooing. The man's son, a slender, pinch-faced little boy, accompanied him, and bore a pack just like his father's, only smaller. The man was a hard drinker, and one could not but pity the lad tied to such a companion. The village people declared the man "gaed the wee laddie great lickin's," which was the more distressing because the boy seemed a quiet little fellow, and not at all vicious.

Toward the end of June there was a funeral in the clachan. It was a day of rain, and my window in the shoemaker's parlor was blurred with the drive of the storm, and the hills beyond the hollow where the

Tochty flowed were half misted from sight. The wind blew and kept the branches of the row of trees across the road tossing, and made a lonely sound about the eaves. I could hear the sparrows chirping forlornly somewhere in the neighborhood of the dwellings, and now and then I saw a gull flap down on one of the farm fields beyond the highway.

The funeral was that of an old man who had died two days before, and this afternoon the men of the place put on their "Sabbath blacks" and gathered about the door of the old man's dwelling. Not many of them went inside, for the house was small and would accommodate few besides the relatives. It stood on the lane that led up to the inn on the back row, and a sombre hearse waited at the corner. When the short house service was concluded, the men mourners prepared to walk to the grave. The hearse headed the procession, and next came the clergyman in his shovel hat, closely followed by the rest of the company. The weather was so wet that every one carried umbrellas and wore waterproofs or overcoats, and thus the straggling group wended its way down the road toward the burying-ground, a good mile distant.

The bee expert of the village, known as "The Auld Lad," had stepped in at the shoemaker's to see the procession pass, and I said to him it seemed too bad the funeral should come on so stormy a day; but he



GYPSIES

thought it a good omen, and said it was an old saying in Scotland, —

“Happy is the bride that the sun shines on,
Blessed is the corp that the rain poors on.”

In the Auld Kirk churchyard, which was the place of interment for all the hamlet, stood a substantial stone shed that had been pointed out to me as the “Deid Hoose.” It occurred to me now to ask the Auld Lad about this building. In response he told how, when he was a schoolboy, “the students frae the medical colleges used to be liftin’ the deid when they were first buried.”

For a long time the people all over Scotland watched each newly made grave every night during several weeks. The watchers kept their vigils in twos for the sake of company, and they always carried a “load gun” with them, and, what was of hardly less consequence, a bottle of whiskey to alleviate the cheerlessness of their occupation. They usually stayed in the church or a near house, looking out frequently, and going now and then to the grave. The warmth of summer might sometimes tempt them to stand guard outside, but “On a winter nicht it was cauld, mind ye,” said the Auld Lad, “aye, and they didna care to be exposit.”

At last, to save this close watching of the graves,

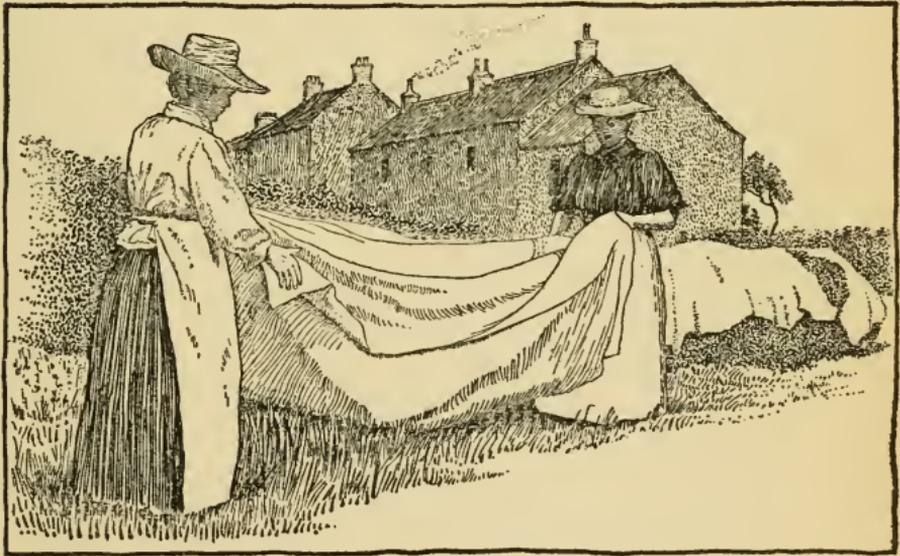
the dead house was built. It had a floor of sand in which the coffins were buried about two feet deep, to be taken up at the end of five or six weeks for their final interment in the kirkyard.

This talk about the dead house led the Auld Lad to relate the following bit of history. "There was a wuman," said he, "the wife o' a meenister, and the nicht aifter she was buried what did the bedrel (sexton) do but dig doon to the grave to get twa reengs he'd taken notice of on her feenger. But when he got to the body, he couldna pu' the reengs aff the feenger, and he was just cuttin' the feenger aff when the wuman turned in her coffin, mon, and said, 'Oh dear!'

"Then she told the bedrel if he'd lat her oot, she'd never tell on him; and the bedrel said he would; and he helped her to the gate of her hoose, and she went, all in her grave-clothes, and rappit on the door. Her mon was inside, and he sayed, 'If ma wife wasna deid, I'd say that was her rap;' and he opened the door, and he lat her in, and at the fricht o' seein' her he fell richt ower backwards. But they brought him roond; and the wuman lived sax years aifter that, and she had twa bairns, and one o' their names was Ralph Erskine — and, mon, that's a true story!"

About four o'clock of the day of the funeral the rain suddenly ceased, and the dun cloud-mass overhead

slid away into the east and left clear sky and sunshine behind. By evening the grass and earth were nearly dry, and the children were playing in the roadway and climbing along the dykes. Women with babies in their arms, and women without, stood at their gates, or their neighbor's gate, chatting, and now and then a man enjoying a quiet pipe of tobacco made one in a group.



Spreading Blankets after the Wash

III

THE WAYS OF THE FARM FOLK



A Servant Lassie

THE Drumtochty farmers complained a good deal of hard times, and in the last few years their profits had undoubtedly been small; yet they were careful, hardworking men, and the majority of them had money laid aside. Most of

the farmhouses stood some distance from the main roads, at the end of a lane. I naturally expected, when I followed up one of these lanes, that it would lead me to the front door of the house, but the farm buildings were not arranged on the American plan. The houses turned their backs on the public approaches, just as the mansions of the gentry do, and it was often a puzzle to find the front entrance at all.

I came to know many of the farmers, and among them one called "Hillocks," who was especially friendly, and at whose house I was a frequent visitor. He was in reality a Mr. Crockett, but Hillocks was the name of his farm, and locally that was always his title. It was the same on the other farms of the glen — Ballandee, Clashiegar, Drumachar, Shilligan, etc., — their names and the names of their owners were identical to the neighbors, and when there was a change of tenants the new occupant was known by the old farm name, quite regardless of his own.

Hillocks was a good farmer, and he was now very well-to-do, or, as the Scotch say, "had his pocket full o' bawbees" (halfpence). He was elderly and bent, and wore a bushy fringe of gray beard standing out about his face, and had a stiff jungle of hair, that seemed to have had no very intimate acquaintance with a brush and comb of late. Although still hale and hearty, he had begun to feel the weight of years, and there were days when he spent most of his time just digging about the garden, or sitting by the kitchen fire. Yet he continued to be the first one up and about in the morning, and the last one to get to bed at night. His cares were many, both indoors and out, for his wife had been long dead, and he was the sole head of the household.

I felt something like an explorer of strange lands

on my initial visit to Hillocks. The first buildings I encountered, as I walked up the lane to the farmhouse, were a huddle of low stone sheds. Under the eaves of one of them, almost encroaching on the wagon-track of the lane, was a manure-heap with dark, slimy streams crawling away from it across the roadway to a green, offensive pool, where the farm ducks were nosing and paddling. By going between two of the sheds I entered the farm "close," a bare earth yard walled in on three sides by the house and its outbuildings. A pet lamb with a bell tied to its neck ran out of the kitchen door to investigate me, and some loitering hens sidled about doubtfully, ready to take flight if I proved aggressive. Several heavy, two-wheeled carts, with their shafts tilted skyward, stood idle at one side, and there was a scattering of other farm machines.

Near the back door was a heavy old pump, with an accompaniment of dirty puddles and a good deal of unsightly litter. I looked in vain for some other entrance. As a matter of fact, every one went in and out this rear door, except on the occasion of a wedding or funeral or a formal call from the minister, and I fancy that many of the farm folk were only half aware they had such an institution as a front door. Even for the minister, there was no way to approach it save by going up the lane past the byres

and into the close. A narrow gate in a remote corner of the close gave admittance to a hedged garden, as I discovered later, and by following a gravelled path along the house wall one reached the front entrance. The garden was filled with vegetables and small fruits, and there was no lawn. But, to compensate, the walks were very tidy, and were bordered by box and flowerbeds, while the gray stone sides of the house were relieved by vines and fruit trees trained to grow up on them.

While I was hesitating in the close on my first visit to Hillocks, the housekeeper, an intelligent young woman with tousled hair, appeared at the back door and ushered me and the pet lamb into the kitchen, explaining, as she did so, that the lamb ran all over the house, upstairs and down. The room I was in had a paved floor, a wide fireplace, and deep windows. A few lines of colored crockery on the shelves of the dresser brightened the apartment a little, but on the whole it was dingy and dark, and devoid of ornament. The tables and chairs were as plain as it was possible to make them, and the tops of the former were half worn away with use and scouring.

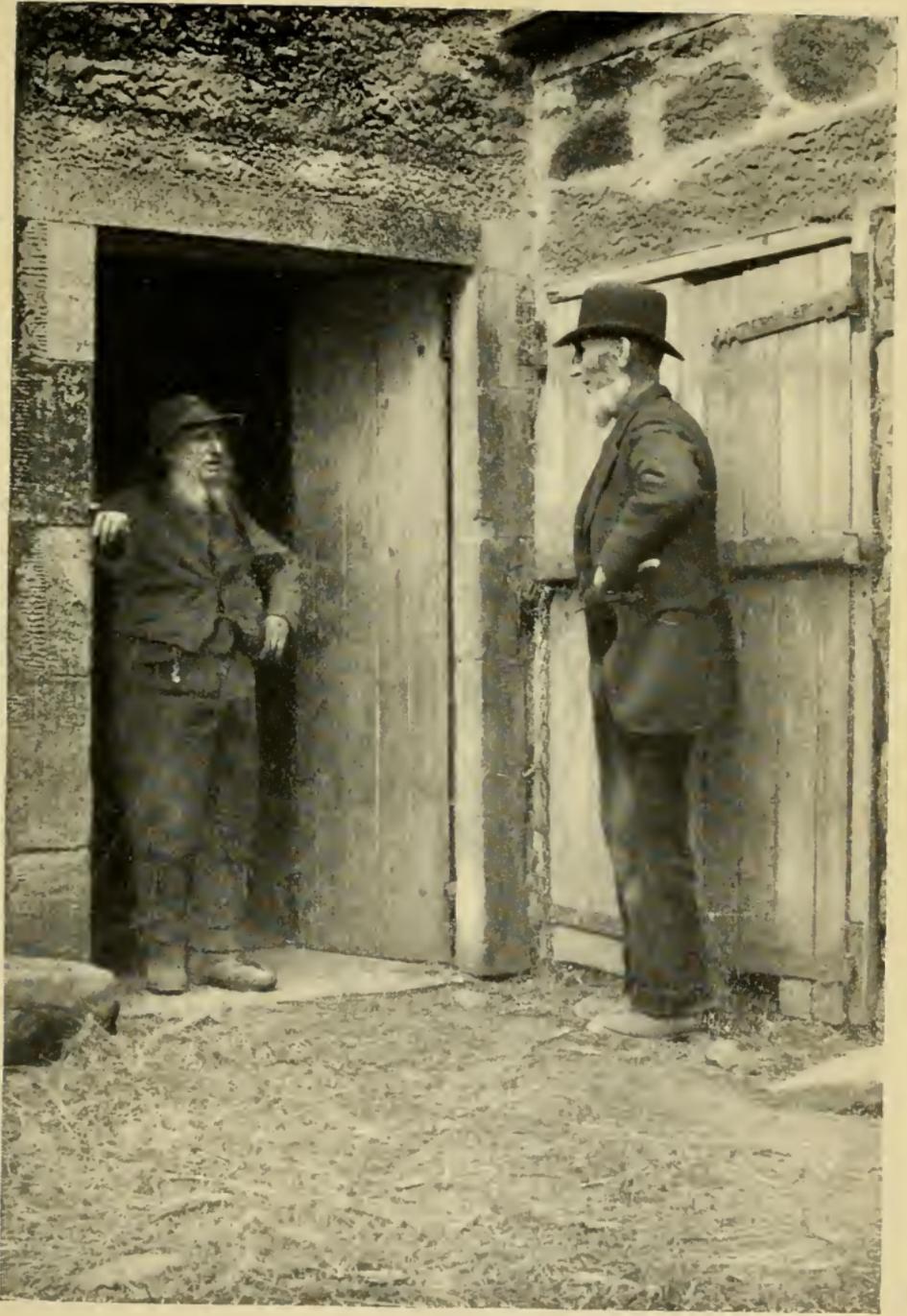
Some lumps of soft coal were burning in the fireplace, and to hasten the fire the housekeeper added several crooked sticks of wood which showed a perverse tendency to roll out half burned on the floor,

girdle

keeping the room dusky with smoke. Suspended from the crane was a big girdle (a thin disk of iron sixteen or eighteen inches across, with a bail), on which the housekeeper was baking scones. Scones are great round cakes as large as a dinner plate and about three-quarters of an inch thick. They are something like soda biscuit, but are tougher, and are best eaten cold. In looks they are not at all dainty, nor even attractive, yet spread with butter and jam they are very palatable.

I went in search of Hillocks presently. He was at the barn where the threshing-mill was running. Power was furnished by a long-armed turnabout, outdoors, to which four horses were attached. A man sat high on the hub of the contrivance, and as he revolved, encouraged the horses with a long whip. Within the barn, up in a dusty loft, I found Hillocks, assisted by a boy and a wild-looking girl, putting unthreshed oats into the mill, while down below were several men taking care of the straw and oats as they came out. The work was nearly done, and soon Hillocks accompanied me into the house. He was hospitality itself. "Ye're as welcome as the mornin'," he declared, and when he discovered that the old dwelling interested me, he showed me all over it.

"If I veesited America," said he, "ye'd shaw me all o' your hoose, noo, wouldn't ye? Well, then, I'll lat ye see all o' mine."



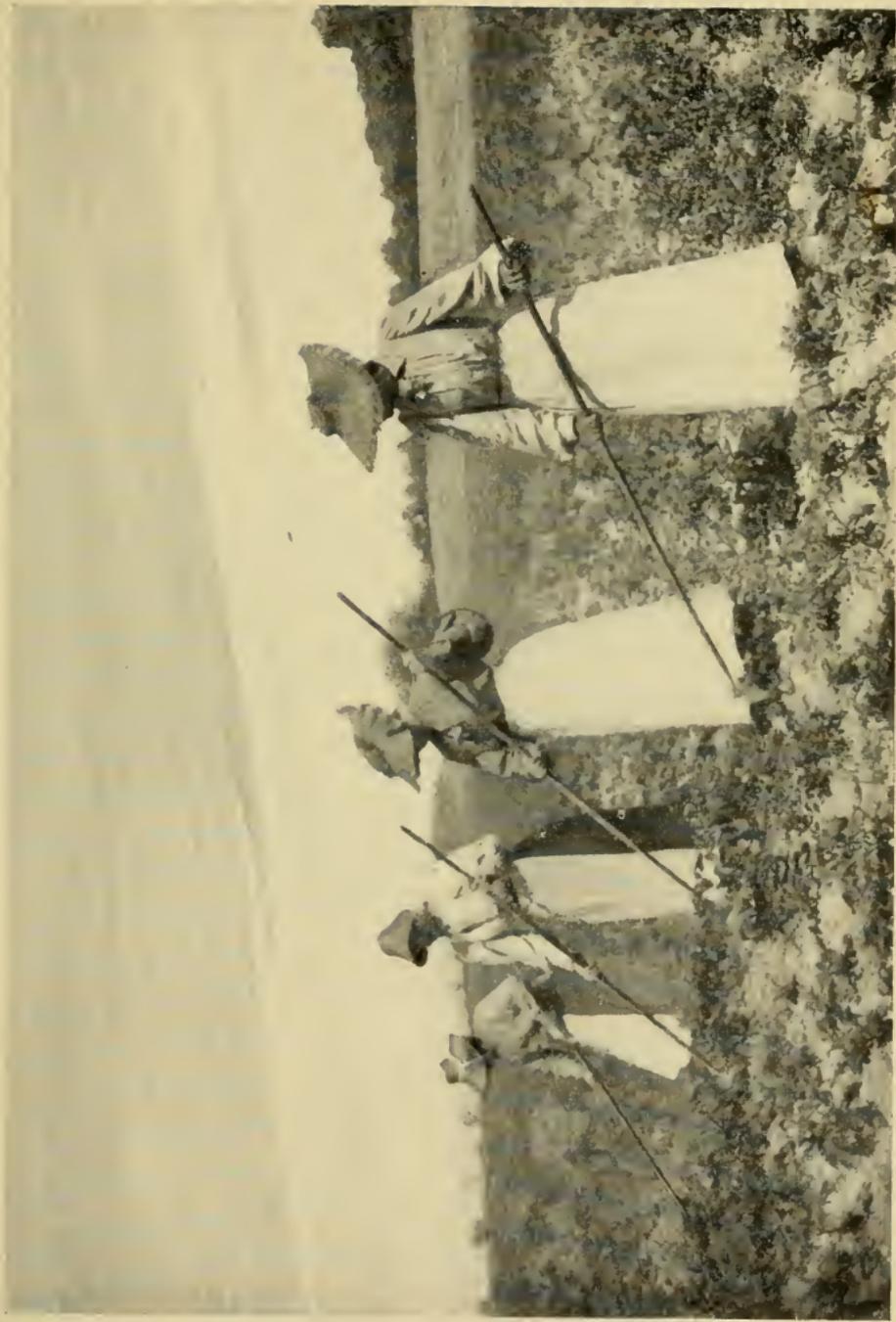
NEIGHBORS

It was an ancient and ill-arranged structure, and disorder and bareness reigned undisputed. The lives of the inmates seemed wholly given to getting a living, and if aught beyond that was gained, it was hoarded. I suppose in large part the lacks of the average Scotch farmhouse are explained by the fact that it is not owned by its farmer occupant. What he himself does to better it he counts as thrown away. Improvements are begged from the factor, not undertaken independently, and the factor apparently is not anxious to do much beyond making the place habitable. Between the thrifty desire of both tenant and landlord to save, not spend, little is done to make the home surroundings more convenient or to improve the house and add to the indoor comforts and amenities. Cottage kitchens often had some brightness, but in the farmhouses they were apt to be dull working-rooms that to New-World eyes were grim and repellent. Indeed, all the rooms were devoid of homelikeness, and our cosy American sitting-room seemed a thing unknown.

The farm fields, in pleasant contrast with the houses, were free from weeds and under the most perfect cultivation. The furrows turned by the ploughman were absolutely straight, and the rows of tatties and neeps could hardly have been more regular. These clean fields and the care bestowed on them would have been an object-lesson to the average Yankee farmer.

Hillocks was very proud of his housekeeper, and frequently, when I called, he had her wrap up several of her scones in a newspaper for me to take along to my boarding-place. He was convinced that she had no equal in all the region. "I was yon at the inn ane day to pay ma rent," said he, "and there was twenty and fower men there besides, and I thraws a five pun note onto the tawble, and I says, 'I'll aye wager ony mon here that I hae the best hoosekeeper i' the coontry roond' — I did that! and they daurna ony mon tak' me oop."

He had another lass on the farm who was a good housekeeper too; but she was cross-eyed, "ane e'e glowerin' up the lum (chimney), the ither i' the kail-pot"; and he was particular about his victuals, and did not feel sure that a person who saw so crooked would not get them mixed. So he kept her at field tasks usually. Still, she took the place of the housekeeper now and then, because the latter objected to being indoors all the time, and wanted to work in the open air for a change. There were women laborers on every farm in the district, some old, some young, and they did all sorts of work, except the very heaviest. The wage of a woman working by the day was ordinarily fifteen pence. A young girl, however, who hired out on a farm by the year would live at the farmhouse and receive six pounds for her first year's work,



WOMEN WORKERS

about ten for the second, and possibly fifteen the third year.

Besides the girls living on the farm, Hillocks for a part of the time had several feminine day-workers. I went with him on one occasion to visit a many-acred potato field where four such helpers were hoeing. Two of them were married women from the clachan; yet the fact they had homes and husbands to care for did not prevent their hiring out to the farmers when opportunity offered. With their wide straw hats, light aprons, and long-handled hoes the squad in the potato field looked very picturesque, and even attractive; for their attire had a neatness and freshness scarcely to be expected under the circumstances, and three of them had nosegays pinned to their gowns. Their tongues were running on with great animation, but they kept steadily at work just the same.

In my calls on Hillocks the old farmer never failed to emphasize his hospitality by offering to treat me, and the first time he was very insistent it should be whiskey. But I had been forewarned. "Aye, he'll be gaein' you a dram," the shoemaker's wife had said. "He pretends to hae vera guid whuskey. 'Tak it oop,' he says, 'it'll no hurt ye. It'll gae doon tae your vera taes.' Oh, aye, ye'll be haein' a nip o' 'the auld kirk' if ye gae tae Hillocks. Ye canna reseest him!"

When Hillocks found there was no stirring me out of my prejudices, he ordered the housekeeper to bring in milk, of which he was hardly less proud than of his whiskey. Like all the milk produced in the region, it was uncommonly rich and sweet. He accounted for its virtues by saying they were due to the "yarbs" the "coos" browsed on in the dens. He thought those luxuriant ravines were peculiar to the district, and, in cow pasturage, he doubted if any other portion of the earth was favored to a like degree. Hillocks himself chose to drink my health in the liquor to which he was used, and from a cupboard he brought forth a decanter and a wine-glass. He filled the glass, then raised it aloft and prefaced the draught with a stiff little speech full of good wishes.

His decanter contained "Irish whuskey," he told me. "Ah, but there's a difference in drinks," he continued. "I was ance in Glesca, and the whuskey there was juist poison. Twa-thirds o' it was water, and the lave was some stuff—you couldna tell what—that they had put in't. I bought a glass o' it, and aifter ane taste threw it unner the tawble. 'Twasna fit to drink. But the *Irish* whuskey—it is grund, mon! There was ane evening the doctor doon below invited me in to hae a taste, and he set oot some Irish whuskey, and we drank five or sax roonds. It was grund! The doctor couldna walk steady to the door aifter it, but



AN UPLAND PASTURE

I gaed awa' hame wi' nae mair tribble than if I had ta'en water."

This affection for the social glass was nothing exceptional. The Scotch as a people are hard drinkers, and their favorite liquor, whiskey, is kept in nearly all the homes for occasional family drams and for treating friends who chance to call. The conviction is growing, however, that it is the curse of the country; and drinking and drunkenness, which were once accepted as a matter of course, if not as an actual glory, are falling more and more into disrepute.

My host, at the close of his reminiscence showing his prowess as a consumer of Irish whiskey, got out his snuff-box, and with the little ivory spoon that was inside administered a good sniff to each nostril. The snuff-taking habit was not at all general among the women or the younger men; but the pungent dust was held to be one of the necessities by men who were middle-aged or elderly. When two such met, their cordiality was pretty sure to be accentuated by one or the other getting out his snuff-box, and each taking a companionable pinch. In case the box was offered to a non-snuff-taker, he was considered satisfactorily polite if he simply passed it under his nose.

Many visitors came to Drumtochty, drawn by the fame that had been given it by Ian Maclaren, and among them were a number from across the ocean.

“It’s unearthly—a’ thae Americans comin’ here,” was the comment of one of the older village folk; for this interest shown by the outside world was to the average inhabitant something past understanding. The most notable of the visitors, while I was there, was a public reader, a woman, who made a specialty of Scotch stories. She gave a reading from Maclaren in the schoolhouse before she left, and the audience, which was entirely unused to exhibitions of the sort, was very much impressed. Hillocks, who had a front seat, was entirely overcome by the dramatic impersonations, and declared afterwards that he did not suppose there was such a thing in the world.

The next day, at the request of the reader, I took her and her father, who was travelling with her, to call on Hillocks. The old farmer considered this a great honor, and hastened to ask us what we would “take.”

“Ye wull surely taste wi’ me,” he said. “Ye’re no a’ teetot’lars! Ah-ha! Weel, noo, I neever jined the teetot’lars masel’, but I dinna drink, nevertheless. I jüst tak’ a bit noo and then wi’ a neebor, to be social and friendly lak. Wull’ye hae a glass wi’ me? A bit whuskey ’ill no hurt a mon.”

Later in our call he took hold of the reader’s sleeve and remarked: “That’s a fine goon, wuman. It maun hae cost a gude bit o’ siller. But it’s warum, too, aye, gey warum, and it’s saft lak unner the feengers.”

He mourned some over the contrast between himself and his visitors. "You can traivel a' aroon' the warld juist as you please," said he, "while I maun work on because I canna afford to stop." Yet he was worth forty or fifty thousand dollars.

I have said that in the matter of cleanliness the farmhouses of the region impressed me unfavorably, but there were exceptions. For instance, at Drumachar the dwelling was quite irreproachable. The scullery and the milkhouse had floors of asphalt and walls of whitewashed plaster, and there was no sign of dirt anywhere indoors. Outside, however, was the coal-heap close under the kitchen windows, and a great flock of hens, ducks, and turkeys made themselves at home in the neighborhood of the back door. On the day I was at Drumachar noon came just as I was leaving the house, and I met at the door two young women, the farmer's daughters, in wide, scoop-brimmed hats, coming in from hoeing. The lassies looked neat and attractive, their cheeks were rosy, and they seemed perfectly healthy and contented. Every year in haying time the older girl made all the stacks — no small task, for the farm was the largest in the district. Fifty cows were kept on it and the milk was sent off daily to Dundee.

Haying begins at Drumtochty the last of June. Mowing-machines are in common use, though scythes

are by no means things of the past. Turning is done by hand, but every farmer has a horse-rake. The weather is so inclined to be dull and showery that it is difficult to cure the grass in a reasonable length of time, and it is therefore raked up while still rather green, and piled in cone-shaped stacks, each containing about a fair-sized load. The hay is left stacked in the field where it grew for several weeks until thoroughly dry, when it is loaded on carts and conveyed to the stackyard near the farmhouse. One mowing suffices, and in the fall the land is let for the winter grazing of the sheep from the moors.

The horse-rake employed in gathering the hay into windrows is a heavy iron affair, that looks as if it was meant for a harrow. A man walks along behind to manage it and drive the horse. A very different type of rake is used to bring the hay from the windrows to the stacks. It is a many-toothed wooden contrivance, like a double-edged comb. It slides along flat on the ground, and the horse is hitched a considerable distance in front, to allow as large a mass of hay as possible to gather on the teeth. When it is to be dumped, the man stepping along in its wake lifts the handles enough to make the teeth catch in the ground and force it to flop over. At Drumachar the younger sister rode the horse, sitting astride on a blanket.

In the centre of each haystack is a rough, wooden

tripod eight or ten feet high, to serve as a support, and to help in ventilation. The person on the stack tramps the hay and places it as it is thrown up from below till it is piled well above the top of the wooden tripod. Special care is taken to arrange the final forks so that they shall form a cap and shed the rain. That the top may not blow off, two ropes are adjusted over the stack. The ends dangle down the sides, and a man below weights them with stones. Then a ladder is set against the stack, and the worker up aloft descends.

The women do their full share of the haymaking, and their presence gives the mowing lots an air peculiarly domestic and social. I noticed at Drumachar that not only the farmer's daughters and several hired female helpers engaged in the work, but if callers came, whether men or women, they too went to the hayfield, and while they visited, partook in the labor, in spite of their best clothes. The children were there also, and the scene was a very pleasant and busy one.

What the everyday work of a Scotch farm is I can perhaps best make clear by describing it as it was at Hillocks, for it was there I became most familiar with its routine. Of course, allowance must be made for variations in details. Hillocks himself is out in the fields in summer at half-past four. But previous to leaving the house he rouses the rest of the farm family

and does some of the preliminary kitchen work. First he attends to the fire, which, thanks to his mania for economy, still has a dim bit of life in it lingering from the day before. Each night, to save the expense of the match it would be necessary to use in relighting his fire if it went out, he covers the coals with clods — peelings of mossy turf from the moor. These peelings are chiefly used to cover the potatoes when they are piled up in the fields for winter storage, but Hillocks makes them do double service.

After he has replenished the fire, Hillocks hangs the porridge pot on the sway, with enough oatmeal in it for the household breakfast, and he sets a mess of milk heating for the calves. The farm help are supposed to be up and starting work at five, but, like a great many folk in other parts of the world, they feel their sleepest at getting-up time, and their response to the master's summons is not as ready as it might be. Most likely they nap until he comes in from his field work and calls again. The farmer begins to be disturbed now, and he cries up the stairway that the clock has struck five, "and the naxt one it'll chop'll be sax!" or he informs them, "the sun's gaein' wast, and the pay's rinnin' on."

The girls exasperate him by their dilatoriness in dressing, and to them he calls out, "It'll tak' ye five minutes to pit in every pin!"

Judging from the usual looks of their clothing, pins were the chief fastenings, and I suppose a secure adjustment consumed of necessity a good deal of time. The men, when they rise, go to the barn and take care of the horses, and the three lassies milk the cows and feed the calves and pigs. Toward seven, the breakfast hour, the men come in and wash. None of them use soap; neither do the lassies. It is a luxury of which Hillocks does not approve; and when one of his hired girls exchanged some farm produce with a pedler, for a cake of the toilet variety, he was very much shocked. She put it in a convenient place for family use; but Hillocks would not allow such extravagance. "Washin' hands with soap!" he exclaimed; "ye're enough to ruin ten men!"

The girl with longings for soap had a weakness for the esthetic in other directions also, and one day created a similar storm by whitening the ash-hole, and going over the hearthstone with blue chalk. These things are quite customary among such Scotch housewives as take pains to beautify their kitchens, but to Hillocks it seemed a waste of valuable time and energy. "I've lived seventy and twa years i' the world, and never seen the ash-hole whitened afore," was his disapproving comment.

The farm breakfast consists of porridge, milk, and a cup of tea. The girls gather at a table on one side of

the room, and the men at a table opposite. As they sit down, Hillocks is wont to say, boastfully, "I had a drill (row) hoed afore ony o' ye came oot;" or if it is not the hoeing season, he mentions some other task he has accomplished while they were drowsing.

From breakfast till noon all the farm hands, with the exception of the housekeeper, are working in the fields. At "twal" they come in to eat dinner. The bill of fare is broth made of kail, carrots, pease, and cabbage, followed by meat and potatoes; and occasionally there is a dessert of rhubarb, stewed with milk. After the men go out, the women may make a cup of tea on the sly; but they all scurry out of sight if Hillocks appears in the midst of this clandestine indulgence, for he "doesna alloo much tea."

Just before dinner the lassies had driven in the cows, and now they resort to the byres and milk them, and then turn them out to pasture again. The men care for the horses, and sit about smoking and talking till two, when they are due in the fields. At half-past six they break off work, put up their horses, and are free to do what they please. The supper at seven is of tea and jam, with meat food in the form of ham, stewed rabbit, or eggs. Bread, scones, and oat cakes are on the table at every meal. Between eight and nine the women milk for the third time, and their work is not often done till toward ten.



HAYMAKING

Hens and ducks were plenty at Hillocks, but they were never served on the family table. They went to market instead, and were turned into "siller." The hens were the care of the housekeeper. They roosted on some poles under the eaves, in an old cow byre. They laid all around the buildings, sometimes in the corn, or under a hedge, and there was one biddy that walked up the back stairs every day, and laid an egg in the ploughman's bed.

The farmers hire their help by the year, and the year ends at Martinmas, the 28th of November. There are two hiring days, the first known as "Little Dunning Market," and the second as "Flit Friday." The former, which is by far the more important, is the great holiday of the year to the farm help. It comes on the third Friday of October, and they all go to Perth and stand along the chief street, and bargain with the farmers who come among them to hire.

"Are ye gaein' tae fee thae day?" asks the farmer.

If the reply is affirmative, and they can settle on a satisfactory wage, the farmer gives the man a shilling to bind the bargain, and each takes the other's address. So great is the crowd on the street that "it seems a won'er the women and bairns do not get crushed."

It is not a quiet crowd. The ploughmen are there for a holiday, and they are bound to celebrate, and "An awfu' lot o' them gets drunk — women tae."

“Every Jockie has his Jeannie,” and the men are giving all the girls they know fairings — that is, they treat them to sweeties (candy), fruits, and drink, and buy them ribbons, gloves, and other little things. For themselves the ploughmen invest in “great muckle paper roses,” half a dozen on a branch, and this branch they stick in their hats. The hilarity waxes higher as the day advances, and men are seen parading around with their arms about their sweethearts’ necks, and in the demonstrative sociability the women’s bonnets are half torn off their heads, though the wearers are quite oblivious of the fact. But the day at length comes to an end, and the farm help scatters out into the country, and the next morning those who have recovered from the effects of their holiday are at work in their old places.

There they continue until Martinmas Day, the time appointed for “fitting” to their new masters. Flit Friday is the Friday after Martinmas. It is a mild repetition of Little Dunning Market, and exists for those who failed to fee on the earlier occasion. Such go then to Perth, and stand for hire on the chief street, and bargain for places just as the others did a few weeks before.

Aside from these days that were peculiarly the ploughman’s, there were various others sprinkled through the year that had more or less of a holiday flavor to the

people of Drumtochty. To begin with, there was the "First Footin" that ushered in the new year. The young men did not go to bed on New Year's Eve, and at twelve o'clock they rang the Free Kirk bell, and started out for a tour of the village. As they went they made all the noise they could, shouting and singing, beating drums and playing on "melo-jeons" (accordions). They knocked on the doors and bade the house dwellers get up and let them in. Not so many respond to these summons as in former days; but where entrance is gained, the first man who crosses the threshold treats the family to whiskey, and the midnight callers all expect to be treated in return. The idea is that the "first foot" in a house on the New Year brings it good luck, provided there is an accompaniment of mutual treating.

But "First Footin" is only an incident at most, and the New Year's observance of Hansel Monday is of much more consequence. This is the first Monday of January, and translated into plain English it means "Present" or "Token" Monday. Bits of money, or small articles bought for the purpose, are given to the children, while good feeling among their elders is promoted by neighborly visits, in which they lunch and drink a friendly glass together. In old times it was the fashion with the arrival of each caller to get out a great kebbock (cheese) and hand it to

the visitor, who put it on his knee and cut off what he wanted to eat. Now, all callers are treated to short-bread, and every housekeeper lays in a goodly supply of it the week preceding. Probably no one anticipates Hansel Monday with more pleasure than the lass who delivers the mail; for her faithful services during the year are then remembered by the bestowal of many little presents of money, when she makes her rounds. In the evening there is generally a dancing party in the schoolhouse, with a fiddler to furnish music, and the merriment continues till daylight.

The next notable day is one appointed in February for a ploughing match. At eight o'clock on the day selected, sixteen ploughs are ready for the contest in a big field on one of the large farms. No end of men are present from all the country around to look on and to partake of the refreshments, both solid and fluid, furnished the crowd by the farmer on whose land the match takes place. Each team is to plough a half acre, and the work continues well into the afternoon. At the close of the contest the judges make the awards and distribute the prizes. One prize is for the man who finishes first, another for the one with the best horses, another for the oldest, and one for the youngest ploughman, one for the tidiest dressed ploughman, one for the ploughman with the largest family, etc. If a man did not excel in one way he was

likely to in another, and the list of prizes was long enough, so that every man had a fair chance to get something.

On April first the children celebrate in much the same way they do in our country. They fool each other and their elders, pin bits of paper on coats, and send the unwary on errands that are invented for the day. The errand trick is the one on which they most pride themselves, and it is that gives the day its Scotch title of "Gowk's Errant Day."

"Fastern's E'en," too, is the occasion of considerable curious celebrating in Drumtochty. I was a good deal puzzled to know what the term meant, for all that the villagers could tell me was simply that it was usually in February. First came Candlemas, and then you waited till you had a new moon, and the night of the next "Chuesday" after that was "Fastern's E'en." Finally I asked the Free Kirk minister, and he said it was the evening before Lent, an evening which in some countries would be celebrated as the climax of the carnival time preceding the Lenten quiet. It was a strange echo of these revels that had found its way to the Scotch upland. Some one in the village would make up a lot of small "treacle scones," and invite all the "young folks" to come in for the evening. By young folks was not meant just the unmarried lads and lassies. "Oh, we wouldna like it," said the shoemaker's wife,

“no to gae after we marry. The young fowk are ony frae twal to fifty, married or unmarried. I hae seen a gude hooseful whiles i’ this kitchen on Fastern’s E’en. Soom sit on the chairs, soom on the bed and the table — oh, onywhere! The scones wad hae things stirred in wi’ the batter, but ye couldna tell what you might get. We wad aye feel the scone wi’ our feengers afore we ate it. Soomtimes there wad be ane thing in it, soomtimes twa, or it might be none at a’. If you found a reeng, you wad be the first to marry; or a but-ton, you wad marry a tailor; or a thimmel, wad sew for a leevin’; or a threpenny bit, wad marry a reech mon. Then by and by, aifter the fun is ower, each lad wad be huntin’ a lass an’ speirin’ wad she gae hame wi’ him. ‘Are ye ready to gae hame noo?’ he wad say; and if she said, ‘No, I am no ready,’ he wad ken he couldna hae her, and then he wad speir soom ither lass, and aifter the lassies were a’ seen hame the lads might pu’ the kail stalks up in our gardens, or tie sticks across our doors so we couldna get oot naxt mornin’. Aye, it wad fair scunner ye, soom o’ the things the laddies dae on Fastern’s E’en.”

In September a “flower show” is held in the school-house, to which resort the people from all the region. They bring for exhibition flowers, both cut and in pots; garden vegetables, fruits, honey, butter, cheese; and the cooks each contribute samples of their culi-

nary art in the shape of a certain number of scones and oat cakes and six boiled potatoes. A small charge is made for admission, a "sheddle" (schedule or catalogue) is printed, and various prizes are given.

Later in the fall the young folks find pleasure in the dusk of the chilly evenings gathering the hedge cuttings and rubbish into piles and making great shanacles (bonfires). Still later comes Hallowe'en with its "apple dookin'," burning of nuts, and other sports, and then there is a blank until Christmas. On that day, in the homes where there are young children, they "do up the hoose wi' greens," which means that the kitchen is trimmed with box, fir, ivy, and holly; and a final touch is furnished by a sprig of mistletoe, which is hung over the kitchen door to give the inmates the liberty to kiss whoever comes in. It is mainly the young people who do the kissing. If a man whose youth is past takes advantage of the mistletoe, the others deride him and say: "You've no need to be rinnin' aifter the lassies. You're up on the shelf a'ready." Inexpensive presents are given to the bairns at home and to some of their small relatives who live near by. The grown-up folk take no notice of the day for themselves, except that the wife invites in several friends to an extra good dinner at seven after "he," as the wife calls the husband, has finished work. Plum pudding and tea cakes are the special features of this repast.

The year ends with "Hogmanay Night." "Hogmanay" is an ancient term of uncertain meaning, though some suppose its equivalent to be the hearty old-time greeting, "God be with you." On this last night of the year it is the custom of the children to go "guysin'." They start out, half a dozen or so in a company, just after they have eaten their supper, at about six o'clock. "Soom blacks their faces wi' soot," explained my landlady, "wi' perhaps a spot here and there o' whitening. Ithers hae false faces on. They wear auld coats, and tie their trousers up wi' strae. I gey often dress Jimmie as a wuman. I hae seen them no kennin' him at a'. Soom wull hae penny whistles, and they carry long sticks to pound wi' when they dance. They gae a' through the clachan to every hoose, and then to the farmhooses not too far awa'. They gae in wi' no muckle knockin', an' the fowk say, 'Why div ye no begin to sing and dance?' One o' their songs is this —

“ ‘ Get up, auld wife, and shake your feathers,
And dinna think that we are beggars,
We're juist a when bairns come oot tae play ;
Rise up and gie us oor Hogmanay.’ ”

Before they go, the fowk treats them to oranges, short-bread, or cake, and gies them usually a penny apiece. They wullna get hame till ten or eleven o'clock, and soomtimes Jimmie hae near twa shillings."

The grown people, too, go guysing occasionally. In that case two men dress up in women's clothes, and two women put on men's garments, and a third man goes along and plays an accordion. But such parties are only intent on having a lark, and do not make the extended tours the children do. They go simply to a few houses of their special friends and dance and perform, and with their masks and costumes try to mystify those on whom they call, as to who they really are.

Perhaps I should include among the holidays the two fast days of the year, but there is nothing recreative about them. One comes in June and the other in December, and they are kept much like the Sabbath, with cessation of work and long services in the churches that are very generally attended.

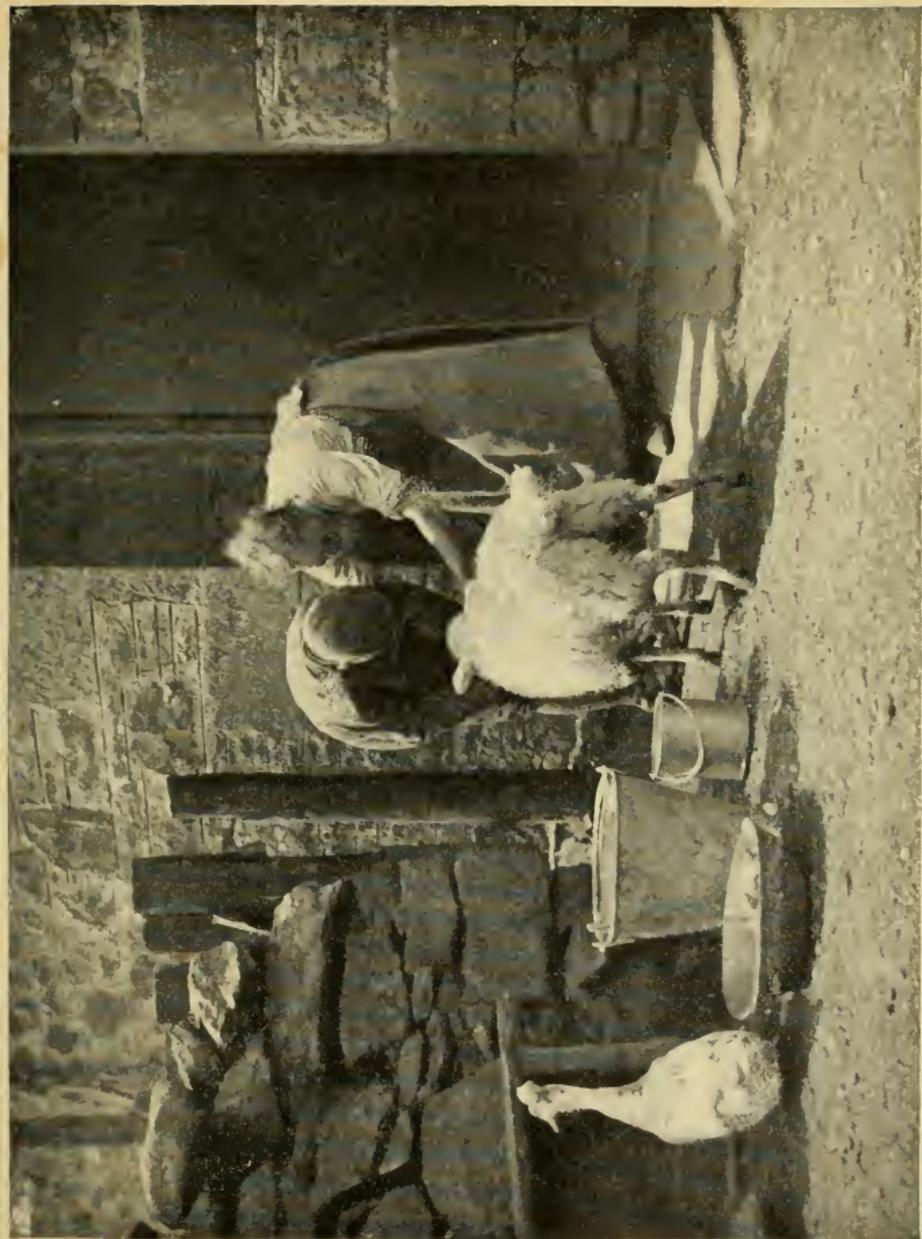
Of a character that has much more of the holiday air, are some of the customs connected with the weddings. The evening of the day preceding that set for the ceremony is one looked forward to with dread by the prospective bride, for that is the "footwashing" evening. A crowd of young people call at the bride's home, but she, often half distracted, has gone into hiding. The visitors search high and low, and never give up till they are successful. "I hae seen them," said the shoemaker's wife, "rinnin' a' through the toon aifter her. There was ane lass lived naxt door, and

she came into oor hoose and went through the scullery and oot at the back window whiles the crowd was waiting at the door. But they juist saw her heels gaein' wast the road, and were aifter her; and she went doon the lane and in at Jean Robinson's, and hid in her garret; and when the crowd came, Jean tried to persuade them she wasna there, but they wouldna be persuaded. There were a guid mony, and Jean cried, 'For God's sake, dinna gae up my garret! If ye a' gae up, ye'll come doon through.'

"But they got the lass and took her hame. Then she was set in a chair, and her shoes and stockings pulled aff, and they wad rub their hands up the lum in the soot and then rub them on her feet, and use brushes, too, till her feet wad be juist shinin'. Whuskey was generally gaein' at the feetwashing, and soom o' the men wad be very rough. Clothes wad get dirty, and soomtimes torn, and if you wore your best claes, so much the waur for you. I ken that ance Sandy Duncan came in unawares, late, and he had on his white cuffs, and they got a haud o' him wi' their soot, and he was a sight to behold.

"They use soap and cloths and brushes a', in the washin', and the flure wad be juist sailin' wi' water. Then at the end they'd hae a dance. We'd hae nae music, but we'd sing to dance by — nae words, only diddlin (humming). When we'd get gaein', we'd a'

FEEDING THE PET LAMB





diddle thegither, soom o' us on ane tune and soom on anither; and aifter that the lads wad very likely carry the bridegroom aff on their shoulders to the public and make him stand treat a' around."

On the evening of the wedding a sharp watch is kept that the bridegroom may be seen on his way to the home of the bride, and if the night is rainy, it is thought to be a clever pleasantry to pelt him with flour. Wet or dry, many friendly shoes are thrown at him, though the friendliness is not so apparent if the aim proves true. One woman told me that on an evening when she was to act as bridesmaid, she accompanied the groom from the clachan to his intended's home on a neighboring farm, "and I walkit juist a wee buttie along," said she, "gaein' east on his arm, when soom ane threw a shoe, and it hit him side o' the heid and cut his face, and the blood poored doon, and I thought he was killed."

If the bride's home was sufficiently distant, so that the bridal attendants rode to it in a brake, every one threw shoes and rice at the occupants of the vehicle as they were leaving the village. "I mind," said the bridesmaid before quoted, "I threw my mither's slippers ance, when I hadna time to find ony auld shoon, and they gaed into the machine (wagon) and I never saw them again."

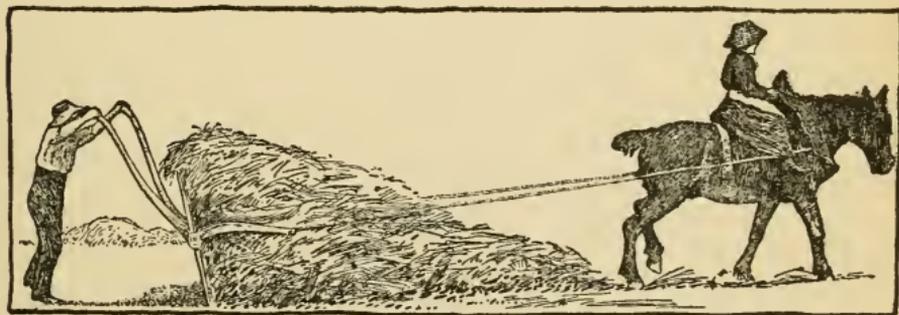
The guests gather at the bride's in the best room.

Just before the ceremony the bridegroom goes in, and there he is "talkin' awa'" when the bride enters a little later on her father's arm, preceded by her bridesmaids. The young couple now take their places before a window, and the minister reads the service. The minister's remuneration consists of a pair of gloves and a silk handkerchief supplied by the groom, who also is expected to give his best man, shortly before the wedding, a white shirt and collar and tie. The couple themselves have a variety of presents, including lamps, silverware, and other household furnishings, and a Bible, which is the regulation gift from the minister. These things are shown to calling friends on the two or three days that antedate the wedding, but are not exhibited the evening of the ceremony.

On a table in the room where the wedding takes place is the bride's loaf, frosted and fancy and, not unfrequently, three stories high. Near by are wine and wine glasses. As soon as the ceremony is over the bride cuts the loaf and the bridesmaids pass it about among the guests. At the same time the wine is poured and healths are drunk. Then the company adjourns to an upstairs room and sits down to supper. This room has been cleared of its ordinary furniture, and two long tables improvised with boards give it the air of a dining hall. Dishes have been borrowed from the neighbors, and the girl friends of the bride

have helped prepare the feast, and are present to wait on the tables. Roast beef, boiled ham, fowl, pastry, beer, and bottled lemonade are the chief items in the bill of fare.

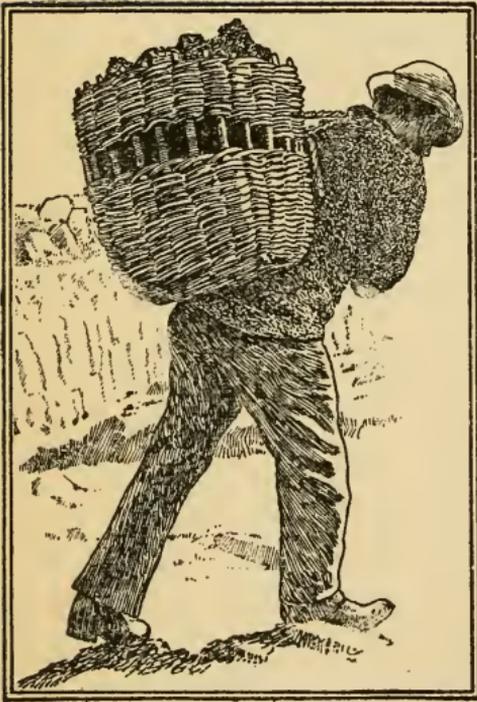
The minister leaves at the conclusion of the supper, much to the relief of the company, whose spirits are not a little repressed in his presence. They now go downstairs, and the old people sit and talk in the best room, while the young folks dance in the kitchen. The scraping of the fiddle and the clatter of feet, with pauses now and then for some one to sing a song, go on till midnight. Then there is an intermission, and tea and cakes are passed around, and such as choose take a drop of whiskey. At one dancing is resumed, and it is two or three hours later when the wedding party breaks up.



A Hayrake

IV

AN EXCURSION



Carrying Peat out of the Bog

FOR the most part my stay in Drumtochty was uninterrupted by any trips that took me farther from the village than I could conveniently walk. The only jaunts of a more extended character were several visits to Perth and a three days' drive up into the Highlands. I hired a gray pony and a yellow dogcart from a farmer for this Highland journey, and started at

eight o'clock on a Monday morning, feeling a good deal elated that the conveyance was in my sole possession without a driver to consider and to provide for. The cart, like nearly all British vehicles, was very

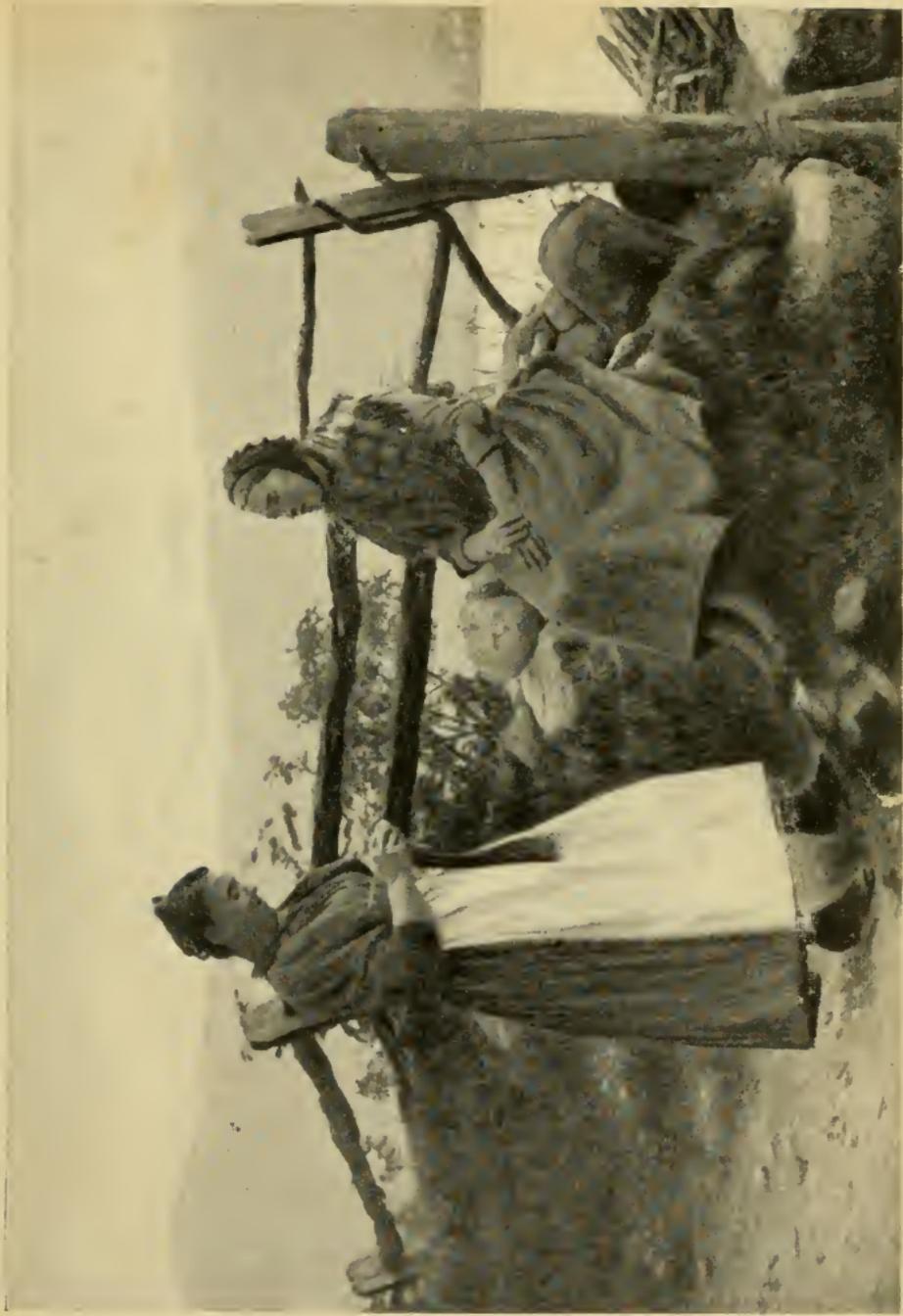
high and heavy, and the wheels were typically British in their breadth of tires and general solidity.

I was only troubled by two things — firstly, because I had failed to ask before starting what the Scotch said to their horses when they wanted them to stop or go on; secondly, because I was fearful that when I met a team I would bring on a collision by forgetting it was the custom in Britain to turn to the left, instead of to the right as with us. But the horse seemed to understand the intent of my commands, even if they were in words foreign to it, and the teams I met were so few and far between that my anxiety on their account was mainly wasted. I carried a pock (bag) full of grain for the horse, and a box full of provisions for myself. Noons I stopped for lunch by some roadside burn, whenever and wherever I took the fancy, and, after I had set the horse feeding, would get out my lunch box and find some convenient boulder for a seat, and dine in true gypsy fashion.

The earlier part of my journey was for many miles up the wide, pleasant valley of the Tocht, but at length I entered a crooked mountain cañon, Glen Urtach by name, overshadowed by great craggy ridges on whose gentler declivities the brown heather clung. These mountains looked as if thunderbolts and tornadoes had made them their playground; for their sides were everywhere furrowed with deep jagged ravines, and

their lower slopes were strewn with masses of loose rocks hurled down from above by the sudden storm floods. The natural wildness of the scene was further emphasized by the fact that the glen in all its extent of three or four miles contained but two houses, and these were nothing but lonely little cottages occupied by shepherds whose business it was to care for the moorland sheep.

Near the entrance to the glen were the grassy embankments of a Roman camp, but a feature of the valley that interested me more than this relic of the dim past was a great boulder about a mile beyond. It stood a little aside from the highway, and a much-used path leading to it was evidence that it had many visitors. What the attraction was, I could not have conjectured, had I not heard its story previously. It had a smooth, rounding top, and rose above the ground to a height of seven or eight feet. At its base lay three heavy stones, the largest about the size of a peck measure. It was a common custom among travellers who happened into Glen Urtach to try "saddling the mare" — that is, to attempt putting the stones up on the boulder. They slid off with surprising ease, and few persons had the strength or cleverness to lodge all three. Still, it was allowable to boast, even if you only succeeded with the two smaller ones. That the sport was a popular one



VISITING

was attested by the battered whiteness of the top of the boulder.

Beyond Glen Urtach, I almost at once entered a second glen, the name of which I can spell a good deal better than I can pronounce it—Q-u-a-i-c-h. The valley here was not confined by mountains, as had been that I left behind, and though there were steep, rocky hills looking down at some remove, the near landscape was one of wide lowlands, girt about with gentle slopes of heathery moor. Presently I approached a small lake, and by its shore came on a strange little village—a huddled, irregular group of possibly twoscore dwellings. But many of these were roofless, and others had only remnants of roofs—a few gaunt timbers, it might be, with sometimes a bit of old thatch clinging to them. Not more than a half-dozen of the houses were still lived in, and they too were partakers in the general ruin, and were patched and dishevelled to the last degree. Their roofs were of leaky thatch, with turf laid on thickly along the gable ends and ridgepoles, and the shaky walls were propped with frequent posts. Yet certain of the house fronts had redeeming touches in the form of flowering vines growing about the low doorways, and there was one, where the doorstone had been gone over recently with the tint of sky-blue chalk that is esteemed so attractive for the threshold among Scotch cottage-dwellers.

On the grass, near one of the houses, lay an old man taking care of a baby, and talking with a rosy-cheeked young woman who was standing in a neighboring doorway. I had hitched my horse and had been walking through the village, but now I stopped to converse with this group, and before I left was invited to step inside the dwelling. It had no second story, nor even a "loft," and the living rooms were only two, unless a third apartment, reserved for the cow, is counted. To keep the warmth from escaping, the low-raftered kitchen ceiling was pasted all over with many thicknesses of newspapers. Underfoot was a paving of great flat stones, with wide cracks and uncertain hollows between. In a pocket of the wall was a bunch of a bed, and conspicuous among the other scanty furnishings was a rack of crockery, with the kist (chest) containing the family supply of oatmeal beneath it. At one side of the room was a fireplace made of heavy stones, piled up so as to leave a depression in their midst, and the smoke went up a rude chimney of clay-daubed slabs hooding out from the wall. The wide chimney orifice began about four feet above the hearth, and when I put my head under and looked upward, I could see a bit of sky through the haze of smoke. That the wind and rain must have driven down freely at times was very apparent.

The village had once been prosperous and full of

inhabitants, but the little farms of the old crofters were now a part of one large farm, or were growing up to heather. I was informed that the titled owner of the glen chose to "kill off" the villagers, in order to raise grouse. No doubt the fewer people and the less land under cultivation, the greater the area of moor, and the natural sequence would be more game and more pleasure for the aristocracy in their hunting; but my sympathies were with the crofters, and I found the village in its lonesome decay very melancholy.

I had been warned that the road up Glen Quaich was a "rough" one, and I resumed my journey with anticipations of discomfort. However, "rough" applied to a road means a good deal in an American's vocabulary, and it was an agreeable surprise to find that nowhere was the glen road otherwise than hard and smooth. Its only defect was its narrowness. Two teams could barely scrape past when they met, and usually one of them would draw well out by the roadside and stop to give the other as free right of way as possible. The road continued the full length of the loch, keeping to the levels near the shores. Then it turned aside and began a zigzag ascent up the steep slopes of a mountain. At length I reached a plateau of wild, rolling moorland that had no touch of human softening save the light streak of the unfenced highway winding through the brown heather. This

road, like that in the valley, was macadamized, and the encroaching turf at the sides had recently been spaded out. Its tidiness was in curious contrast to the rudeness of the region it traversed. Everything was desolate and sombre—no houses, no trees, not even a bush—just great hills and deep valleys shorn down to turf and heather. On the hilltops and the steeper slopes the rugged rocks broke through. In the hollows were black bogs and dark pools, and I passed an occasional lonely little lake bordered with a rank growth of reeds. There were streams a-plenty, but they added no touch of brightness. Their pools and fretting shallows and foamy tumbles were almost lost in the boulders that strewed their courses, and they were unshaded and bare to the point of uncanniness.

The only noticeable flower on the upland was the bell heather. It grew in scattered clumps and patches amid the common ling heather that would paint the hills a month later, but which as yet was only in bud. The heather did not cover in one solid mass the whole moor. Instead there was a constant intermitting with irregular areas of turf or rusty earth. The explanation was that every spring strips of heather were burnt off by the shepherds, an acre or so to a strip, to give the grass and the tender, new-starting heather a chance to furnish food for the sheep. But the fire was not allowed to spread beyond definite

limits, for the gentry were very particular that the game birds should have plenty of shrubbery in which to build their nests.

As I journeyed through the moorland desolation I occasionally roused a peesweep (lapwing) into complaining crying or started up a family of grouse. All along were sheep, in couples and little groups, feeding on the thin grasses. They were long-haired sheep with black faces and curling horns. Each of the old sheep was apt to have a lamb with it and, in case such were near the road, the little one at my approach would slip around behind its mother and look out at me inquiringly from its safe retreat.

Once I passed a line of game covers — perhaps a dozen of them in all — stretching along over the moor eight or ten rods apart. Each cover was just a bank of sods about four feet wide and four high, with a little pile of sods a few paces in the rear for a seat. In the season the sportsmen, hidden by the covers, shot the birds as fast as the gamekeepers drove them up within range. *Brave sportsmen*

The weather was threatening, and the wind blew, and I felt the touch now and then of a stray drop of rain. I was therefore the more rejoiced when later in the day the roadway began perceptibly to descend; for as soon as I reached the lowlands, I was certain to find some village and a place to spend the night.

Far on ahead I could see a deep valley, and beyond the valley a range of great blue mountains rising up and up till their summits were lost in the drifting gray cloud mists. The road kept taking steeper dips as I went on, and the little horse with the heavy cart pushing behind seemed quite disturbed in its mind, and dug in its heels, and crept down at a pace that would shame a snail. By and by I came to a final descent through a wood that was so slippery and so nearly perpendicular that I took pity on the horse and got out and walked. But no sooner had we arrived at the bottom of the hill than we emerged, as if by magic, into a neat little hamlet, so hedged about on every hand by great trees that it looked as if it had been built in a clearing of the primeval forest. The dwellings crowded along both sides of an oblong open of hard-beaten earth, where a few discouraged grasses grew. At one end of the broad street or common stood an old church, while a quarter of a mile distant at the other end was an ivied stone archway, with iron gates opening into a great park around a castle. The village was Kenmore, at the foot of Loch Tay, and the lake was close by, spreading away to the west in a narrow passage between the great hills and mountains that hemmed it in.

After a night spent at an attractive whitewashed hotel fronting on the common, I went on, keeping to



BY THE FIRESIDE

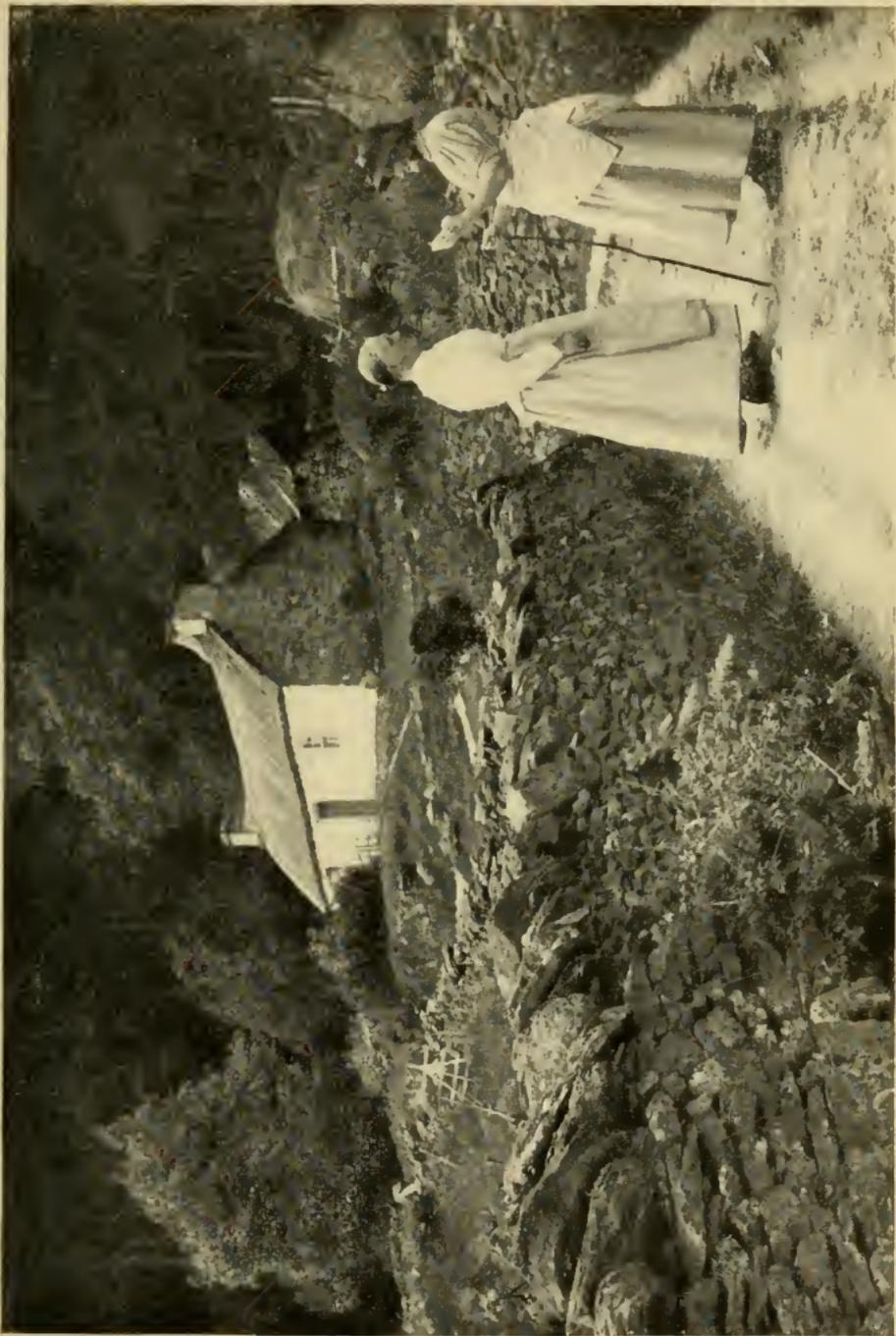


the south side of the loch, and travelling westward. It was a doubtful day of mingled sunshine and light showers. The mountains round about brightened and darkened in a continual change of drifting light and shadows. Their higher peaks were always cloud-capped, and made one feel as if the occasional showers that came misting down their slopes were manufactured and sent out from the hidden summits. The lake, with its wooded borders and its mountain setting, was very beautiful. Along the steep shores I came on frequent thatched cottages that were as forlorn and as rude in their surroundings as those I had seen the day before in Glen Quaich. Some of the gardens connected with these cots were on the most precipitous slopes imaginable, and as the rows without exception ran the steep way of the hill, I thought the owners would almost need the aid of a ladder to climb up and down them.

Toward noon I left the lake and took a road that slanted up the hills, and a mile or two of climbing brought me out on the barren wastes of the heights. The moors were of the same deserted brownness as those I had crossed the previous day, with the same dull reaches of heather, the craggy ridges and unshaded streams, and the scattered groups of sheep. I saw many depressions where peat had recently been cut. These cuttings were always in marshy hollows, but

the hollows were by no means confined to the valleys. Often they were on the highest parts of the moor. The peat holes were rarely more than three or four feet deep, and except for the dark, ragged banks that bordered them, they were hardly noticeable in the moorland landscape. All about the cavities the peat bricks lay drying. Some of them had evidently only been dug out a day or two, and looked like oblongs of stiff black mud. They were as full of water as a sponge, and would lie spread on the heath for a month before they would be sufficiently dry to be carted to the farmhouses.

My day's journey came to an end when, in the late afternoon, I reached a village named Amulree. Its most conspicuous building was a small church crowning a bare knoll and having round about a tiny churchyard crowded with graves. From here I could see a lonely treeless schoolhouse a quarter of a mile out on the moor where two roads met. The rest of the village consisted of a small hotel and half a dozen houses reposing in a valley where an old stone bridge spanned a little river. It seemed about as much lost to the world as it well could be; yet the hotel had many visitors in summer, attracted by the fishing that was to be had in the stream. Just then the only fishermen lodgers were four cigarette-smoking young men with very high white collars, and other things to match.



A MEETING IN THE LANE

I did not think the fish would suffer much at their hands.

On the borders of Amulree I visited one of the rude, thatched farmhouses that were common in the region, and which was of especial interest because it was a typical, old-fashioned cotter's house. As I entered the yard two dogs hanging about the doorway barked at me menacingly; but an old woman came out and quieted them, and when I mentioned that I was from America, she invited me in, only would I wait outside until she could "redd up the hoose"?

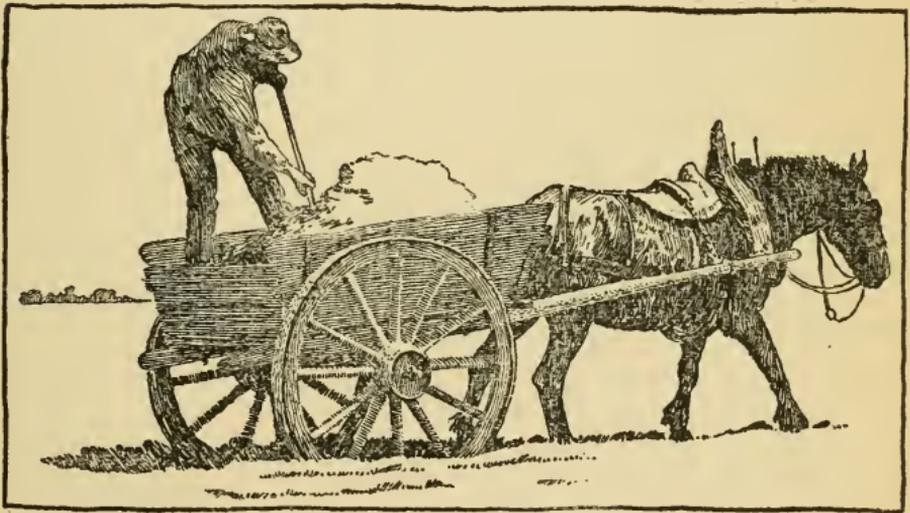
Near the doorway was a tub turned bottom upward, and on that I sat down and looked about. The view was not very inspiring, for it was mainly comprised in a rough, sloping yard, and a group of dismal little stone sheds. Several of the sheds were roofless and half fallen, and the farm tools got along in corners and under the shreds of roof still left, as best they could. The house was soon made presentable, and I went in. It was a long, low building with three rooms, "a but, a ben, and a byre." Translated, that means a kitchen, a best room, and a cow stable. The kitchen occupied the middle, between the other two apartments, and was a combination workroom, sitting room, bedroom, and pantry. "Ben the hoose" served likewise as a sleeping room, and also as a storeroom and

parlor, while the byre was put to double use as a cow stable and henhouse.

The kitchen had been cleared of the pots and pans and odds and ends that had no doubt been lying around handy all over the floor previous to my unexpected advent, and in so far was not wholly characteristic. It was a rickety apartment, much confined in both height and breadth, and with no ceiling save some boards laid loosely on the beams overhead. The crooked timbers of the framework bulged out into the room here and there, and the stones of the floor were so rough, and had such cracks and crevices between, that there was need of practice to keep one's balance on them. As for getting chairs or tables to sit level on such a floor, that was simply impossible. But what seemed to me the least desirable feature of the kitchen was its odor, — and no wonder it had an odor, for there was the cow stable just beyond a thin, shaky partition. On the hearth was a great basket of eggs which my hostess would presently carry out to a grocer's cart that visited the vicinity once a week, selling store wares and picking up small produce in exchange. The woman and her brother were the only dwellers in the house. They had quite an extended farm, chiefly devoted to sheep-raising, and in spite of the lack of comforts in the house and the dilapidation of the buildings, it would not be sur-

prising if these farm folk had a good bit of money laid aside.

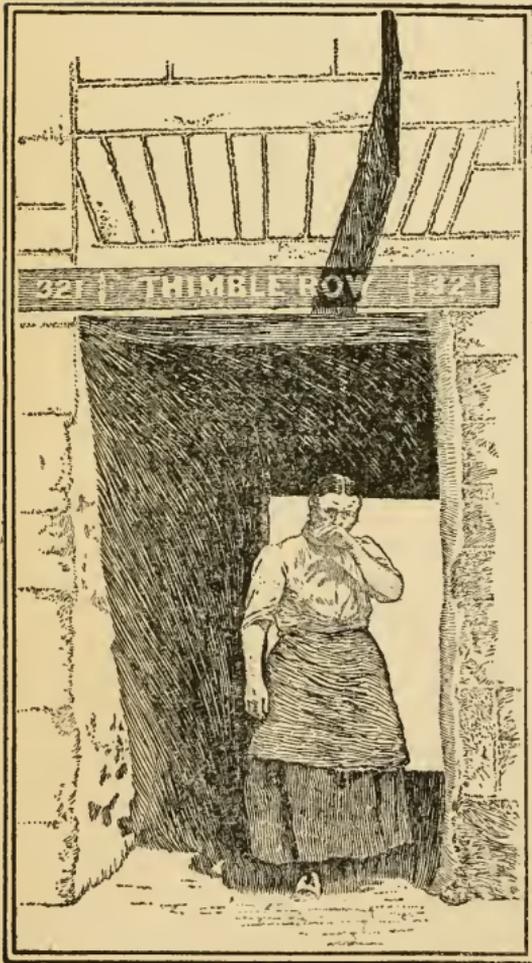
This visit to the cotter's house at Amulree was the most interesting incident of the latter part of my excursion. The experiences of the final day were largely a repetition of those already related, and I have only to add that my leisurely travelling, with its various stops and asides, brought me back to the shoemaker's cottage in Drumtochty about sunset.



“Puttin’ oot the Dung.”

V

HISTORIC GROUND



Entrance to a Close

MIDSUMMER had come and passed, and there were hints of autumn in the bare mowing-fields, and in an occasional chill night. The rowan trees in the dens were beginning to get gay with their clusters of scarlet berries, the moors were taking on a pink cast with the first opening of the heather buds, blue-bells nodded by every pathside, and the wild rosebushes, whose riotous tangles, when I

first came, were profusely adorned with bloom, had dropped their petals and were now dotted over with green hips. So, too, the hawthorn hedges which had been in their fulness of frosty white two months before were now loaded with tiny haws.

It was at this time that I took my final leave of Drumtochty, intending to proceed more or less directly to Edinburgh. But I was in no haste, and most of the first day I spent in getting better acquainted with Perth and its vicinity. Like all Scotch towns, Perth is very much crowded in its poorer parts, and many curious little passageways dive in among the shops that front on the chief streets to the huddles of dwellings in behind. These passages are miniature tunnels, and above each narrow entering arch a name is painted — such and such a “close.” If I went on through, I soon came on a small paved open, hedged about with old stone houses, though once in a while a close took more public character by having in its semi-seclusion an inn, or two or three small shops.

The people swarmed in these humbler neighborhoods, and slovenly women and dirty, half-clad children were everywhere. Among other street scenes I recall a tattered old woman talking with some men and smoking a stub of a pipe. She would take out the pipe every now and then, and spit on the pavement just like a veteran male tobacco-user.

Another picturesque remembrance of the city has to do with a park on its borders known as the North Inch. This park was a great expanse of grass with a few rows of young trees started on it. A number of cows were grazing there, and a scattering of strollers and bicyclers were on the paths; but the main feature of the park was the clothes-poles that stretched away in hundreds for a mile or so. This network of lines was hung full of garments, both of white and gayer colors, and the grass was spread with quantities more, and women with barrows were busy in the midst of this mammoth wash, so that taken all together it suggested, as viewed from afar, some gaudy show in full blast. Children were numerous in the neighborhood of the clothes, many of them babies in their mother's arms or in the care of an older sister. But there were plenty of toddlers, too, and others a trifle more mature, who gave their energies to racing and romping, turning summersaults, and making valorous attempts to stand on their heads.

After a noon lunch I took a tram for Scone Palace. This tram was of the usual British type—a clumsy, two-story horse-car, plastered all over with a crazy-patchwork of advertisements. A narrow, winding stair at the rear gave access to the roof, and the novice finds the ascent rather awkward, and the downlook from the top impresses him with an exaggerated idea of the

height, and makes him fear the vehicle may overturn from topheaviness. Otherwise the roof is an agreeable place in pleasant weather. Scone proved to be less than a half-hour's ride distant. The palace is a gray, castlelike mansion, reposing in the retirement of an attractive park that extends for several miles along the banks of the river Tay. There are many acres of close-clipped lawns, and trees of all kinds, scattered and in groves, not a few of them so lofty and deep-shadowed as to be suggestive of tropical luxuriance.

I saw the palace, but the flag floating from the loftiest tower showed that its noble resident was at home, and I was only allowed to gaze at a distance. On the present palace grounds, not far from the building itself, was once a village where now a heavy wood rises. The market cross still stands to mark the centre of the ancient hamlet, and the people of the region say, "Many a village has lost its cross, but only one cross has lost its village." The burial-place of this olden-time community is just aside from the main avenue to the palace, and that tiny plot within his grounds the Earl does not own, nor can he shut the public from entering his park on their way to it. This is said to be a sore trial to the dweller in the palace, and it is related that in his younger days he spent £40,000 in a vain attempt to get from the courts the right to close this little cemetery.

The first mention of Scone in history dates back eleven centuries, at which time a monastery was built there. The most notable treasure that the holy fathers of the institution had in their care was the stone on which the kings of Scotland were inaugurated. This stone is now in Westminster Abbey, immediately beneath the seat of the chair in which the kings of England are crowned. It is a clumsy, oblong block of dull reddish sandstone, with a few small imbedded pebbles. If its legendary story is to be credited, it was originally the pillow of the patriarch Jacob at Luz, when he dreamed his dream of the ladder to heaven, on which the angels were ascending and descending. Later, about the time of Moses, the stone finds its way into the hands of one Gathelus, son of an Athenian king. This Gathelus became a man of note in Egypt, where he entered the service of Pharaoh. He rose rapidly, and finally married that ruler's daughter Scota. Gathelus was on excellent terms with Moses, who, shortly before the plagues were visited on the land, gave him a friendly hint of what was coming. So impressed was Gathelus with the undesirability of experiencing these plagues, that he took ship and sailed away to Spain. There he acquired a wide kingdom, and there he died.

The ancient stone which Jacob had used as a pillow had always been numbered among the dead monarch's most valuable possessions, and he bequeathed it to his

son, who took his legacy to Ireland, and by virtue of it established himself as chief ruler of the Isle. He placed the stone on the famous hill of Tara, where it served as the coronation seat of a long succession of Irish kings. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the stone was that it gave forth a peculiar sound each time a king sat on it, which intimated its opinion of the new ruler, and this judgment was deemed prophetic of the nature of the reign; but it seems to have lost its power of thus expressing its opinion of fledgling monarchs when it was removed from Tara.

The belief was general that wherever was found the stone the Scottish race was certain to rule. Fergus, first king of the Scots in Scotland, carried the stone of mystery with him when he crossed over to that country nearly four hundred years before Christ, and deposited it in the castle of Dunstaffnage, near Oban. In that residence of the early Scotch kings it remained until the year 834, when it was conveyed by Kenneth II to Scone. From then on the history of the stone becomes more authentic. It was placed in the monastery burial-ground. When a coronation took place the stone was covered with cloth of gold, and the king was conducted to it with impressive pomp by the greatest nobles of the realm. Crowds of people gazed on the solemn scene from a near hill known as the Mount of Belief, or vulgarly as "Boot Hill," a title which has a

curious legendary explanation. The legend is that when the barons came to be present at a coronation they stood in boots half-filled with earth. Each had brought this soil from his native district that he might take part in the ceremonies standing on his "own land." At the close of the exercises the boots were taken off and emptied, and in process of time these emptyings formed Boot Hill.

The "Stone of Destiny" was the visible sign of the Scotch monarchy, and its loss was keenly felt when Edward I of England bore it off to Westminster Abbey. No sooner had Scotland won its freedom, than King Robert Bruce, in concluding the treaty of peace with the English, stipulated that the stone should be restored. But the Londoners rose in a mob to resist the fulfilling of this provision, and the treaty was later abrogated to allow the stone to continue at Westminster. There it was nearly three hundred years afterward, when a purely Scottish prince, James, son of Mary Stuart, ascended the English throne. The two kingdoms then became one, and all parties concerned were as content to have the stone in London as elsewhere.

After the day spent at Perth and Scone I travelled eastward to Kinross, on the shores of Loch Leven. I suppose the majority of visitors are drawn to the loch by its fishing, reputed to be the finest in the British Isles, but for me its attraction consisted in the music

of its name and its association with Scotch song, story, and history. Of all the nooks and corners into which my rambling in the vicinity of Kinross led me, I liked best a little grove of trees just back from the reedy borders of the lake, not far from the village. It afforded a most agreeable shelter and lounging-place, especially in the cloudy and windy weather that prevailed during my sojourn. The waters were gray and white-capped and the sky was rarely otherwise than dull and threatening, though now and then blue loop-holes appeared which let stray patches of sunshine through. Usually a wild duck or two would be in sight, bobbing over the waves with corklike buoyancy.

The view was pleasing, but not in any wise striking. Across the lake rose a green, treeless mountain-range, and another fine grassy range lay southward, while the loch itself was dotted with a number of small islands. On the largest of these, five acres in extent, stood the battered ruin of a castle peeping out from among the trees, and imparting a most stirring interest to the scene, for those walls long ago held Mary, Queen of Scots, a prisoner. She was only twenty-five years of age, yet shortly before she had married for the third time. This marriage followed close on the assassination of her second husband, Lord Darnley, in whose death the new consort, the Earl of Bothwell, was believed to be implicated. Civil war resulted, and the

queen fell into the hands of her enemies, and was taken to this lonely island in Loch Leven.

It was her first real imprisonment, though there had been short periods previously, in her checkered career, when she had been held in restraint scarcely less harassing. The southeastern tower of the castle was set apart for her lodgings, and Lady Douglas was appointed her jailer. Though the queen's followers had been beaten and dispersed in the recent strife, her party was by no means extinct, and the leaders were continually plotting, while they awaited a favorable opportunity to effect her release and restore her to power. Neither the prison walls nor the isolation sufficed to prevent her from keeping in constant secret communication with her friends. She was ably aided in this by her faithful servant, John Beaton, who hovered in disguise near Loch Leven, and never failed to find means of carrying messages to and fro.

At length George Douglas, son of the royal prisoner's jailer, became interested in her behalf, and assisted her in arranging a plan of escape with an association of loyal gentlemen who had pledged themselves to break her chains. But before the project could be carried out it was betrayed, and George Douglas was expelled from the castle in disgrace, and forbidden ever to set foot on the island again.

Restraints were redoubled; yet it was only a few

days later that the queen nearly succeeded in getting away. A laundress was employed who came across the water frequently from Kinross to fetch and carry the linen belonging to her Majesty and her ladies. This laundress consented to assist the queen to regain her freedom. George Douglas, who, though expelled from the castle, remained concealed in the house of a friend at Kinross, was to help also. Until the plans were perfected, Mary pretended to be ill, and passed her mornings in bed, apparently indifferent to everything. But one day, when the laundress came as usual, and went to the queen's room to deliver the clothes she had washed, and tie up and carry away another bundle, Mary slipped out of bed and disguised herself in the woman's humble garments. Then she drew a muffler over her face, took the soiled clothes in her arms, and passed out of the castle to the boat unsuspected. All went well until, midway between the fortress and the shore, one of the rowers, fancying there was something peculiar about the bearing of their passenger, said jokingly to his assistant, "Come, let us see what manner of dame this is."

Suiting the action to the word he endeavored to pull aside the lady's muffler. She put up her hands to resist, and their whiteness and delicacy made known her identity. She ordered the rowers to go on and take her to the shore, and threatened to punish them if they

refused; but they were aware how powerless she was, and instead they rowed back to the island, agreeing, however, not to inform any one of her attempted flight.

Soon after this Mary found an effective ally in a boy of sixteen, who acted as page to the lady of the castle. This lad went by the name of Willie Douglas, though among the inmates of the fortress he was oftener spoken of as "Orphan Willie," or "Foundling Willie," from the fact that he had been discovered lying near the castle entrance when an infant, abandoned to the good-will of those within. Willie became a most ardent votary of the captive queen, and he told her that below her tower was a postern gate, through which they sometimes went out in one of the boats on the lake; he would get the boat ready and bring the key of the gate. The boy got word to George Douglas, and a company of armed horsemen concealed themselves in a glen across the water, ready to become an escort for the queen the moment she was liberated.

The guards who kept watch night and day at the gates of her Majesty's tower were accustomed to quit their post at half-past seven each evening, long enough to sup with the castle household in the great hall. Meanwhile the five large keys attached to an iron chain were placed beside Sir William Douglas on the table at which he and his mother sat in state. While waiting on the knight and the lady Orphan Willie con-

trived to drop a napkin over the keys and get them off the table without being detected. Much elated, he ran with them to the queen's tower. Mary knew his plans, and was ready to start as soon as he appeared. She was attired in the clothes of one of her maids, who stayed behind to personate her royal mistress. The queen hurried to the boat, and Willie locked all the gates behind them and threw the keys into the water. Then with all his might he rowed for the opposite shore. The loyal horsemen met them, and they were off into the night.

After fourteen months' imprisonment Mary Queen of Scots was free, yet in nearly all the days following she was a fugitive, even until she fell into the hands of Elizabeth of England, and once more was behind prison walls, no more to have liberty save as death on the scaffold released her and ended her troubled, fateful life.

From Kinross I went to Edinburgh, the most picturesque and interesting large town in Britain. The ground on which it is built is much wrinkled into hills and valleys, and on a crag that overtops all the rest is the castle. The town's origin is lost in dim antiquity, but no doubt its founders were attracted to the spot by the defensive advantages of the steep isolated castle rock. There they built their clay fort, and then they began tilling the land in the valleys and on the hills

neighboring, and when danger threatened, they drove their cattle to the rock. On three sides the eminence drops away almost perpendicularly, but on the fourth side it slopes gently eastward in the form of a narrow ridge, along the top and sides of which a town gradually formed.

I had not been long in Edinburgh before I turned my steps castleward, crossed the drawbridge that spans the ancient moat, and dodged along through the guides who blocked the way with offers of their services until I passed under the portcullis-guarded arch of the entrance. As I went in a squad of Scotch soldiers marched jauntily out with their pipes jiggling merrily on ahead. The soldiers with their bare knees, their kilts, high black hats, and other fancy fixings, looked more as if they were gotten up for a circus parade than for war, but they were tall, brawny fellows, and I do not question their effectiveness.

The castle is to-day mainly composed of heavy, gray stone barracks of no great antiquity, but among the rest is a tiny chapel erected about eight hundred years ago, which claims to date back farther than any other building in Scotland. The sole occupant of the chapel, as I saw it, was an old woman who sat behind an array of guide-books for sale, like a venerable spider in its lair, hopeful of enticing unwary flies. In a room near by one can look through some iron bars at the



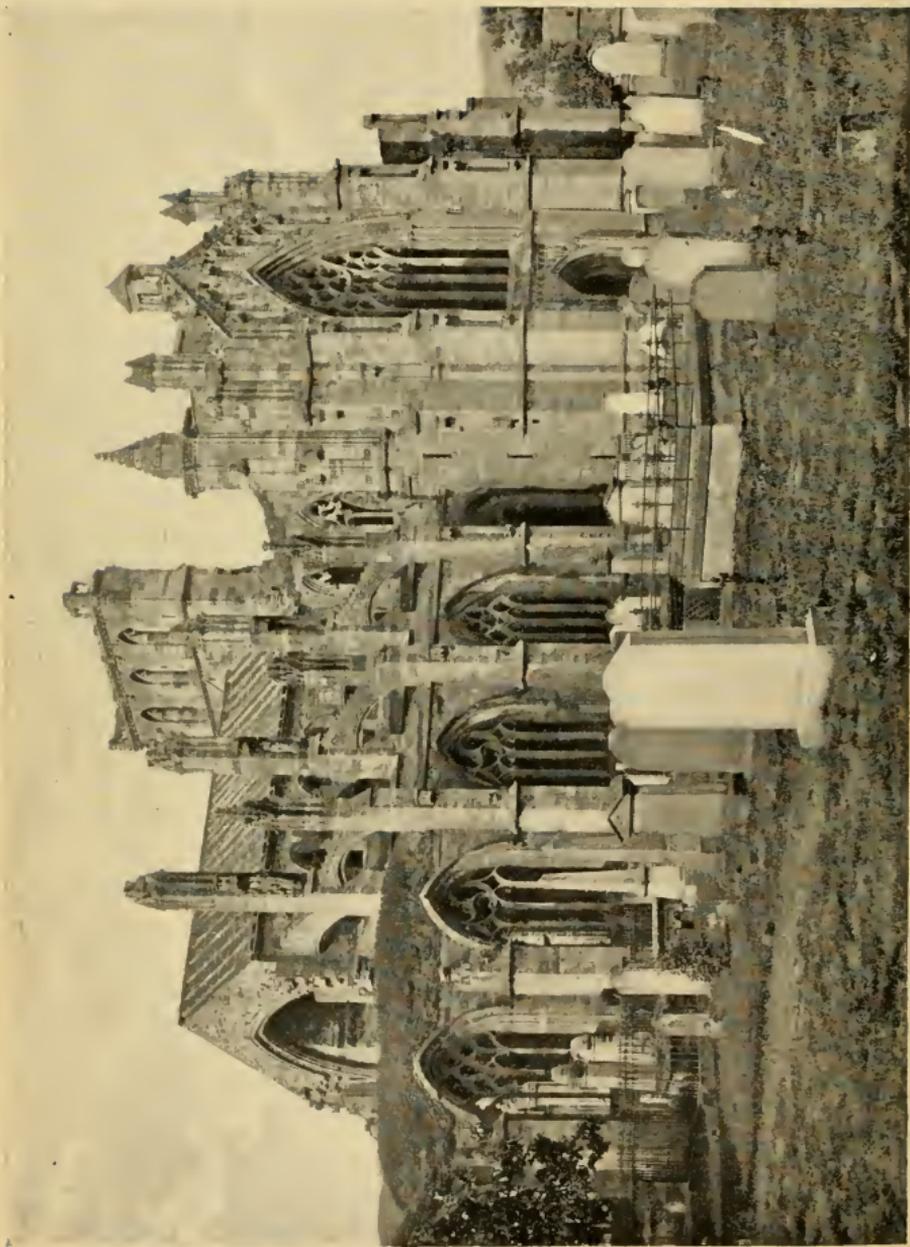
EDINBURGH

ancient Scottish crown, sceptre, and other gewgaws of this sort; but there was to me much more charm in the view from the fortification parapets off over the smoky city. The castle stands at the far end of the ridge, where the rock rises highest, and you cannot but think the situation must have possessed almost impregnable strength in the days before the invention of heavy siege pieces. Nothing, too, would seem more unlikely than escape from the dungeon prisons hewn in the solid rock; yet the castle has been often taken, and prisoners have frequently found means to get free. Even the almost vertical cliffs have been scaled on occasions, and it is one of the pleasures of the present-day little boys of Edinburgh to risk their necks in trying to climb the crags.

Close under the base of the hill to the north is a narrow glen. Through the centre of this runs the railway, but the rest is laid out in lawns and flowerbeds, with a mingling of shrubbery and trees. Formerly a body of water known as the North Loch filled the hollow. The loch was a great help in affording protection from that direction. To gain something of the same security on the other side a wall was erected. For many centuries the inhabitants huddled their dwellings along the ridge immediately east of the castle, and they were all loath to build outside the city wall, because a house thus exposed

was nearly certain to be rifled and burned. Nor was a house inside the walls wholly safe. The town was within easy access from the English borders, and again and again the southern raiders gained entrance and robbed and wrecked the houses as they willed, while the people fled to the castle and to the shelter of the surrounding forests.

Edinburgh became the recognized capital of the kingdom after the murder of James I at Perth in 1437. No other city in the realm afforded as great security to the royal household against the designs of the nobles, and thenceforth it was their place of residence. There parliament met, and there were located the mint and various other government offices. Its importance was in this way greatly increased, and it grew more and more densely populated. But the days of feudalism were not yet past, and wars, plottings, and lawlessness abounded. Edinburgh was a centre of this ferment, for which reason the inhabitants were as reluctant as ever to live outside the walls. To gain room they expanded their houses skyward. The town at this period consisted of the original chief thoroughfare called the High Street and a parallel way on the south, narrow and confined, that was known as the Cowgate, and not until the middle of the eighteenth century did the citizens begin to build beyond the limits. The High Street and the Cowgate



MELROSE ABBEY

were connected by scores of narrow cross alleys, or closes. The dwellings seldom contained less than six floors. Often there were ten or twelve floors, and the great height to which the houses towered was the more imposing because they were built on an eminence. "Auld Reekie" is the term applied to this section of the city, and it is grimy enough with the stains of smoke and age to amply merit the name. The sanitary conditions are in many respects those of the fourteenth century, and scores of families are crowded in some of the tall structures. Probably no other city in the kingdom, not even London, has such grewsome rookeries.

Frequently the old houses with their thick walls and narrow entrances have the strength of fortresses. They were indeed originally the houses of the aristocracy of the town, who were noted for their intrigues and violence, and with whom a house capable of defence was a matter of some importance. As the city grew and the social conditions of the country became more stable, the gentry abandoned Auld Reekie and built houses in the newer sections of the city, while their former domiciles fell into the hands of the most desperate of the poor. Yet the finer and more modern portion of the town is prosaic and commonplace, while in Auld Reekie you cannot but feel a marvellous attraction in the ancient gray walls and crooked, deep-worn

stairways, and the picturesque outthrust of poles from the windows with a few rags of washing fluttering on them, and in the heaps of chimney-pots with their blue curlings of smoke. These old buildings have a sentiment that is never found in new ones—a something akin to human that comes from their long connection with life and its daily labor, its aspirations and its troubles. What stories the old stones could tell if they had speech! What tragedies and dark deeds they must have witnessed!

In the summer weather when I wandered among the tall houses, most of the windows were open, and some occupant leaning out over the sill was rarely lacking. The doorways likewise had their loiterers, and the sidewalks and narrow wynds and closes were thickly populated. There were some dreadful-looking creatures to be seen on Auld Reekie's byways. Once I was startled in turning the corner of an alley to find two women fighting. They were barefoot, bareheaded, dishevelled, and hideous. One was old and black-faced, and had some sort of burden gathered up in her apron. The other, who was younger, but hardly less ill-favored, was brandishing her fists in her companion's face and talking hysterically and crying. Finally she knocked the old woman down. But that ancient got up nimbly, and the two indulged in further loud-voiced abuse. Then they separated, and the gathering crowd dispersed.

The High Street as it descends the hill from the castle at length merges into the Canongate, and the latter thoroughfare continues the gentle downward course for about a mile to the big, dark-looking pile of Holyrood Palace. A little to one side of the palace is a roofless ruin, all that is left of an abbey built in the year 1128 by King David I and named in honor of the holy cross or rood brought to Scotland a few years previously by St. Margaret. Two centuries later this "black rood of Scotland," as it was called, fell into English hands, and no more is known of it. Thrice the abbey was burned by the southern foe, and a fourth time it was plundered and burned by the mob at the revolution of 1688. For seventy years after that it remained neglected, and when it was finally repaired the roof proved too heavy, and fell in. The abbey has continued a ruin ever since that disaster.

The foundations of a palace apart from the abbey were laid in 1503, and Holyrood became the chief seat of the Scottish sovereigns. It is as the residence of the ill-starred Queen Mary that it most stirs the interest of the average visitor. You can see her rooms, and her alleged furniture, including the bed in which she slept, a curious affair with immensely tall posts that hold a canopy aloft high toward the ceiling. Its quilts and draperies are faded now and dropping to pieces, and it is a question whether the bed in its better

days was rich and beautiful or overcolored and tawdry. The impression the rooms made on me was that the household comforts of the old kings and queens were not such as to stir much modern envy.

When I departed from Edinburgh, it was to go to Stirling, a town curiously like the one I had left, in its physical characteristics, for it is overlooked in the same way by a great castle on the heights of a mountainous crag. The situation, by reason of its defensive strength and its position in the narrowest part of the northern kingdom, makes it the natural key to the Highlands, and it was often assaulted in the quarrels of the clans or besieged in turn by Scotch and English.

Across the valley to the northeast is a tall monument erected to the greatest of Scotch heroes, William Wallace. It stands on a rocky cliff and is visible for miles around, and it commands the scene of Wallace's most famous encounter with the English. He was posted on the north bank of the Firth of Forth, which here has the breadth of a moderate river and was spanned at that time by a single narrow wooden bridge. The enemy, fifty thousand strong, lay on the opposite side, but after some days' delay began to file over. Until half the English had crossed the bridge, Wallace held his followers in check and gave no sign. Then he fell on the invaders with such determination that they were thrown into confusion and a headlong

rout ensued. Thousands were slain, and many more were drowned in the river, and Wallace for the time being had "set his country free," as he had declared was his intention.

Barely three miles from Stirling is a still more notable battleground — the field of Bannockburn. I found conveyance thither in a public omnibus which left me right in the centre of the ancient scene of conflict on a broad hilltop. From here Bruce is said to have directed the battle, and a heavy stone embedded in the earth is pointed out as having served him as a seat and a support for his flagstaff. The stone was flat and had a hole in the middle, and looked very like a common grindstone; but lest any one should be tempted to carry it off for such use it has been slatted over with iron rods — or was this to preserve it from the desecration of the relic hunters?

I followed the rustic road down the hill and stopped on a quaint old "brig" arching the stream that gave the battlefield its name. In the ravine below me was the Bannockburn, a pretty brook worrying along through the boulders that filled its channel, and wandering away in a crooked course through the peaceful farm fields. I could detect no sign that a great battle had ever been fought here, so slight is the effect on nature of man's turmoils. The seasons as they come and go erase all marks of ravage and devastation, and

quickly restore the tranquillity that has been momentarily interrupted.

Bannockburn was the climax in the career of that most notable of all Scotch monarchs, Robert Bruce. In the year 1290 we find him one of thirteen pretenders to the throne, and he spent fifteen years thereafter courting the favor of the king of England. At the end of that period he withdrew to Scotland. Immediately afterward he attracted general attention by stabbing a rival claimant at Dumfries, in the church of the Grey Friars. Then he hastened to Scone and assumed the crown. Scotland was at once roused to arms, and war with England began. For a time the Scotch only met disaster, and Bruce had to fly to the Highlands. He found the chiefs there bitterly hostile to his cause, and during several years his experiences were those of a desperate adventurer. But adversity made him a noble leader of a nation's cause. He was hardy and strong, of commanding presence, brave, and genial in temper. The legends tell how he was tracked by bloodhounds into the remote glens, how he on one occasion held a pass single-handed against a crowd of savage clansmen, how sometimes he and his little band of fugitives had nought to eat save what they could get by hunting and fishing, and how Bruce himself had more than once to fling off his shirt of mail and scramble up the crags to escape his pursuers.

Little by little, however, his affairs grew brighter, until at length the Black Douglas espoused his cause. From that time Bruce rapidly won adherents and territory, and by 1313 he had retaken nearly all the kingdom, and even invaded the northern counties of England, levying money and gathering such plunder as he could carry away. Only Stirling castle remained to the English, and the governor of that stronghold was so sorely pressed he agreed, unless meanwhile relieved, to surrender on June 24 of the following year. The English, to avoid this catastrophe and to prevent Scotland from slipping wholly out of their hands, collected an enormous army. It numbered not far from one hundred thousand fighting men, though a large proportion consisted of wild marauders from Ireland and Wales whose efficiency was not all it might be.

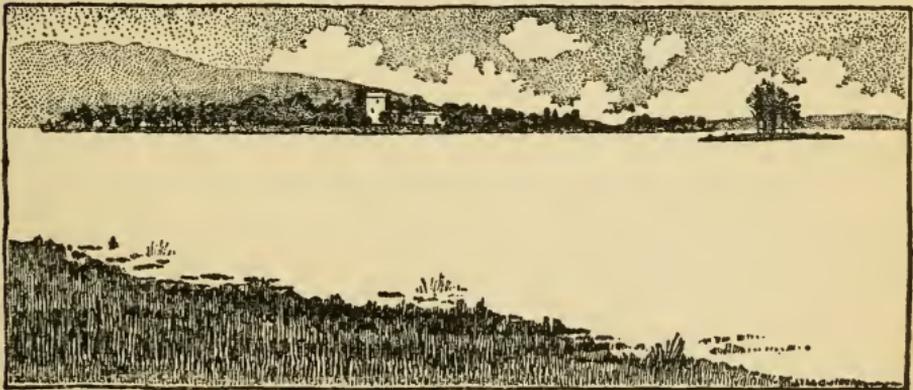
Bruce by his utmost efforts could only muster thirty thousand, yet he prepared to confront the enemy a little to the south of Stirling. The position he selected was on the banks of the Bannockburn, where he was protected in part by the stream, and in part by numerous pits and trenches he directed his soldiers to dig. June 23d the English appeared and attempted unsuccessfully to force an entrance into the castle of Stirling with a body of cavalry. This failure was depressing, and they were still further disheartened by an incident

of the evening. An English knight, Henry de Bohun, observing Bruce riding along in front of his army, had made a sudden dash on him, intending to thrust him through with his spear. The king was mounted on a small hackney and held in his hand only a light battle-axe, but he parried his opponent's spear and cleft his skull with so powerful a blow that the handle of the axe was shattered in his grasp.

On the day following, the English advanced and assailed the whole line of the Scotch army, wrestling with it in a hand-to-hand combat. But the northern spearmen withstood the southern lancers and archers, and the desperate charges, many times repeated, only resulted in adding fresh heaps to the slain laid low by the valorous Scotch. The air was full of flying arrows and was hideous with the noise of clashing armor, the commingling of war-cries, and the groans of the wounded. Blood everywhere stained the ground, which was strewn with shreds of armor, broken spears, arrows, and pennons torn and soiled. The burn itself was so choked with fallen men and horses that it could be crossed dry-shod.

As the day progressed, the attack weakened, and the Scotch began to push forward; and finally the unexpected appearance of a body of the northern camp-followers whom the English mistook for reënforcements to their opponents made the invading

host give way along the whole front. Bruce perceived this, and led his troops with redoubled fury against the failing ranks of the enemy. This onset turned the English defeat into a disorderly rout. All encumbrances were thrown away, and they made their way as best they could back to England, and if the Scotch had had sufficient cavalry, scarcely any would have escaped. Even as it was, nearly one-third of the original army was left dead on the field, including two hundred knights and seven hundred squires. The loss of the Scotch was four thousand. By this victory at Bannockburn Bruce was firmly established on his throne and the independence of the kingdom was won, although desultory fighting continued for years.



Queen Mary's Prison on an Isle of Lochleven

VI

THRUMS



Palaulays

IN nearly all the novels with which Mr. J. M. Barrie has charmed the readers of two hemispheres, Thrums is the home of the characters introduced, and is the scene of most of the comedies and tragedies the author delights to depict.

As the background of the entertaining mingling of life's lights and shadows which is characteristic of his stories, it is a great satisfaction to find that Thrums is a real place and that it accords in many ways with

Mr. Barrie's descriptions. Its name on the maps is Kirriemuir, though the inhabitants commonly shorten this to simply Kirrie; and you will find it about sixty miles north of Edinburgh, at the end of a little branch railroad that leaves the main line at Forfar and climbs half a dozen twisty miles toward the hills.

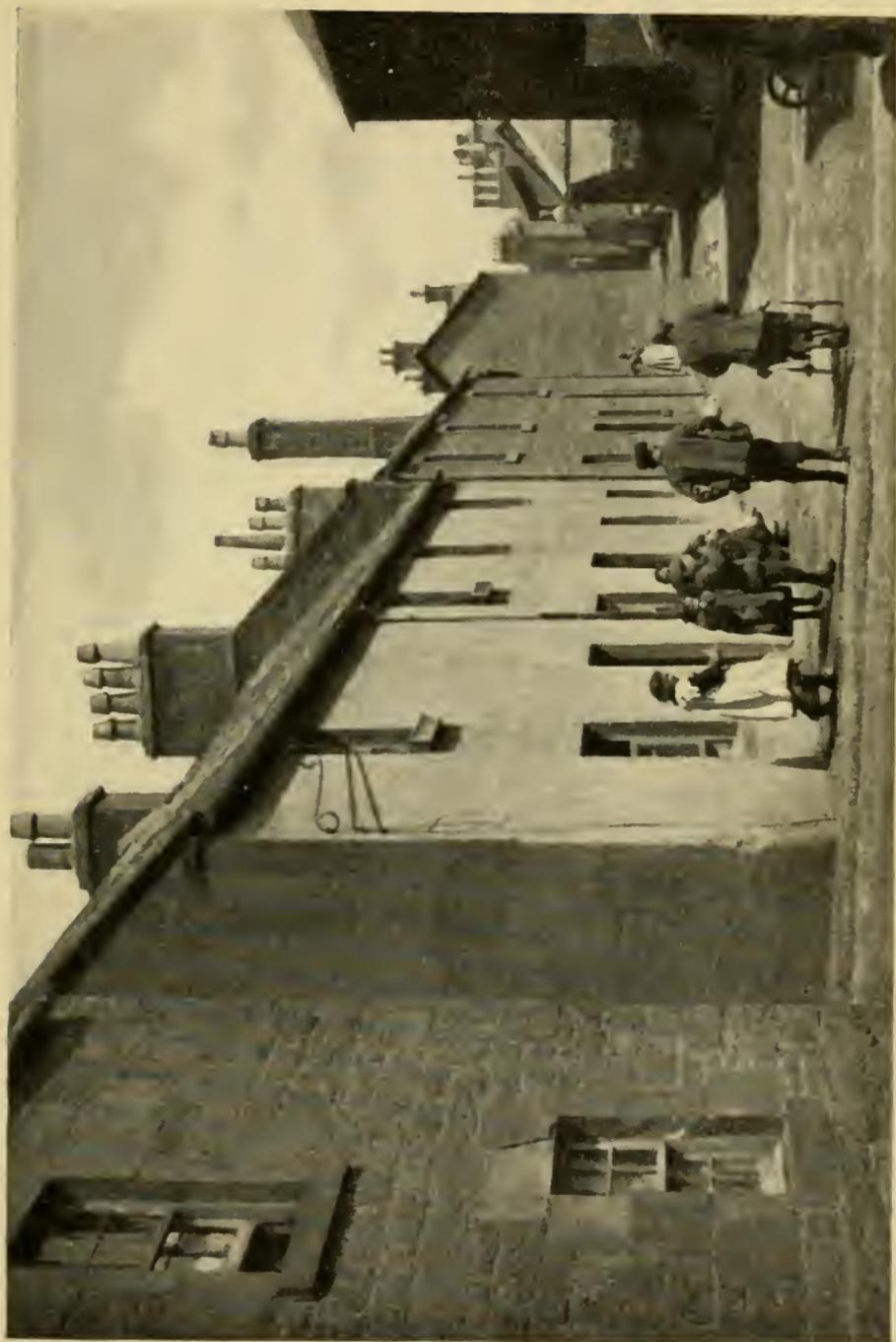
The industry that makes and supports the town is weaving, and in the hollow, where a little stream winds through the village, are two great stone mills that look very substantial and prosperous. They do work which fifty years ago was done wholly in the homes. Then, one would have heard the rattle of the hand-loom from every cottage, but now the mills furnish employment for most of the town inhabitants, and, though there is loss of picturesqueness, the people are undoubtedly better off. A few still cling to the ways of their forefathers, and from an occasional house the old-time clack of weaving even yet comes to the ears of the passer. However, competition with machinery is a losing struggle, and the hand-workers grow fewer every year.

As a rule the people appeared neater and thriftier than those of the average Scotch town. There were none of the barefoot women and few of the barefoot children that one finds plentiful in most villages. Making a living is not as oppressive a grind in Kirrie as it might be. If a street musician strays into the

place, he is sure to carry away a liberal weight of small coins, and when a circus takes possession of the little square, it is always well patronized.

This small paved square, bounded about by the various shops of the tradespeople, with the tiny town hall on one side, is the village centre. From it the houses streak away in the most chancing fashion up the valleys and along the hillsides. No doubt this haphazard character is due to the uncertain and hummocky lay of the land. Wherever you walk you are either going up or down a hill, and the hill is likely to be steep at that. The streets are crooked and have unexpected turns in them, and there are frequent little lanes that have an odd way of jerking around corners and dodging under houses.

The dwellings are nearly all of red sandstone from a quarry high on the hillside. In most cases the houses are weather-darkened and battered, though some of the older cottages have walls coated with plaster, and certain others get periodical brightenings of whitewash. To the last class belongs the house that of all others in Thrums is the centre of the Barrie interest. You go down a steep hill from the town square, cross the stone brig that spans the burn, and at once begin the ascent of the famous brae (the Scotch word for a steep roadway or hillside). When you get to the elbow of the brae, there is Hendry's cot before you at



IN THE TENEMENTS

the top of the hill. It is a one-story house with a narrow garden in front, and in its gable is a tiny window that you feel sure is Jess's window as soon as you see it. This window looks easterly down the brae and over the town; and it is remarkable when one goes about the village and the surrounding hill-slopes how often the cot at the top of the brae is in sight, and how the little window seems watching you as if the house had an eye. In Mr. Barrie's description the cottage roof is of thatch, with ropes flung over it to keep it on in wind. But now the roof is rudely slated. Thatch is out of date in Kirriemuir. Yet there was one rusty line of cottages on a neighboring hill that still retained its ancient coat of straw, and the straw was secured from the clutches of the gales by strips of board fastened on it.

Hendry's cot had tenants, and they were plainly of a thrifty turn of mind, for a black sign hung on the house walls that labelled the place "A Window in Thrums," and announced that souvenirs and lemonade were for sale. If you choose to go up the short walk through the garden and rap at the door, the dwellers within will readily show you the house interior. There is not much to see — just two small rooms with a bit of a passage between. To the right is the kitchen, with its fireplace, bed, table, and a few other primitive furnishings. To the left is "the room," in which is a

second bed, several haircloth chairs, and a spreaded table with an elaborate lamp on it, and a few books laid around the edges in regular order.

Upstairs is an unfinished attic that you climb to by a step-ladder through a trap-door, exactly as in the days when the schoolmaster boarded in the house. There is very little save dust and rubbish in the attic now, but it is lighted by the little window that gives the name to Mr. Barrie's book, though, for the sake of realism, this window should be in the kitchen below.

The working class in Thrums had but a poor opinion of the novelist's books. Nothing happens in "A Window in Thrums," they informed me deprecatingly, but what they saw every day. The talk was the talk they heard next door — mere "bairn's havers," they said, "juist Kirrie balderdash." They thought it was unquestionably great rubbish, and accounted for its popularity by the theory that chance had made it a fad; after this factitious interest had faded they had no doubt other folks would be as sick of the stuff as they were.

Nor were they suited with the author himself. He is not large enough, is too retiring, goes about with his hands behind him, looking straight ahead as if he lived in some dream world of his own — and how could you expect a man of that size and manner to write anything worth while?

Among those who thus criticised Mr. Barrie was a woman who told me a long story of how she and her parents and children and grandchildren had all lived in the little Window in Thrums house. They had only recently moved out of it, and she supposed they were the real heroes and heroines of Barrie's tale. Like enough she, herself, was meant for Jess — if she wasn't, she didn't know who was. Then she said she would tell me the true origin of the title of the book. One stormy night some young fellows set out to rob a neighboring orchard and they wanted her son to go out with them. They knew he slept in the attic, and so they took some apples and came into the garden and threw them up at the little window to arouse him. Her son was away, as it happened, and pretty soon she and her sister, sleeping below, heard the apples come rolling down through the trap-door from the vacant apartment overhead. They were scared, and they awakened their father, who found the little window broken, and the rain pouring in. He called down to them how it was — and what should he do? In a corner of the loomshop at the far end of the house were a lot of "thrums" — waste ends of the warp which have to be cut off every time the weaving of a roll of cloth is finished. It was these thrums they used to stop the window and keep the rain out. That made "The Window in Thrums," or, more

properly, "the thrums in the window." I fancy this origin of the title would be news to Mr. Barrie himself.

The first nine years of his life the novelist lived in "the tenements," a block of old, plastered houses which are the homes of the humblest of the weavers. It was there he picked up his close knowledge of the language and ways of the poor, and his keen feeling for all their traits, from petty pride up to unconscious heroism. In later years his abode was in a substantial stone house just across the road from Hendry's cot at the top of the brae. Curiously enough, Mr. Barrie has never been inside the cottage he has made famous. But his readers and admirers go through it with sufficient care to make up for his delinquency, and they spare no effort to make the little house fit his descriptions in every detail.

It is a little remarkable how many places can be identified in the Kirriemuir region as the veritable ones described in the book. First, of course, is the cot and the little window, and the brae with its carts and its people always going up and down. Then, near by, is the steep hillside of the commonty bounded about with hedgerows, and crisscrossed with uncared-for dirt paths. Here the children play, and here the women still come at times to dry their washing. T'nowhead farm and its pigpen are not far away, and at the other side of the town is the auld licht manse

that was the home of "The Little Minister." The burying-ground road still climbs to the hillside cemetery with all its old-time straightness, and on the village borders is "The Den," of which so much is made in "Sentimental Tommy." This den, or, to use the English equivalent for the word—this ravine, is a bit of meadow hemmed about with steep, grassy ridges and rocky precipices. The villagers gather in the den every pleasant summer evening and lounge on the grass, or loiter along the walks, or play games and join in a Highland dance to the music of the village band.

One of the people whom I met in Kirriemuir was the dulseman. He was the same whom Hendry used to patronize, and I saw him every evening with his barrow on the square. He was a very stolid, slow sort of person, whom nothing short of an earthquake could have moved to the least excitement. On his barrow he carried a long box that held a bushel or two of the seaweed, and a shorter box that contained a couple of kettles full of buckies (sea-snails) which he had boiled with a flavoring of salt that day. The evening loiterers bought and ate these things much the same as our loiterers buy and eat peanuts.

When a Kirrie man approached the dulse-barrow, he turned sidewise to it and said, "Penny's worth o' buckies," and the dulseman scooped up a tin cup full

and emptied them into his customer's coat pocket. Then the man helped himself to a pin out of a rusty tray in the bucky box, or pulled one out of the bottom of his vest, and went over to the curbing, where he talked with his friends, and at the same time extracted the morsels from their shells. The shells were dropped on the paving of the square, and it was astonishing what a strewing of them there was by the end of the evening.

If a man bought dulse, the vendor picked up his fingers full twice for a bawbee (halfpenny) and stuffed it in the man's pocket for him to nibble at leisure. When a woman bought, she received her seaweed in her apron, while the children usually carried theirs off in their hats. I was told that buckies were not good for one's stomach — they only pleased the palate, but that the dulse was medicinal, and helped digestion. I tried a bit of the seaweed one evening, and, except that it was leathery, and that its peculiar salt-water taste stayed in my mouth for an hour afterward, it was not bad. I did not get up sufficient courage to try the buckies. When twisted out of their shells, they looked too like dark earthworms to be appetizing.

The most old-fashioned of all the Thrums dwellings were those that made the line of cottages under the thatched roof. In the far end of this line of cottages lived Jimmie Donaldson and his granddaughter.



SPINNING A "PEERIE"

Jimmie was a telegraph boy, and, in spite of his ninety years, was always ready to run with messages night or day. He thought nothing of a six or eight mile tramp. He was a kindly, talkative slip of an old man, very poor, yet too independent to take a tip for small services. His work brought him only intermittent wages, and this fact often made him so downhearted that he found it necessary to cheer himself up by spending what he earned for occasional drops of liquor. The granddaughter worked in the mill, and it was she who was the mainstay of the household.

Jimmie had three rooms, but as one was a rude scullery that looked like a cellar, and another a loft used only for storage, the little kitchen was practically the home and all of it. This kitchen had a tiny fireplace, two small tables, a tall clock, a few chairs that only the greatest care would coax to stand level on the uneven dirt floor, and some other odds and ends. Two box beds filled one side of the room. A great many of the Kirrie kitchens had box beds in them. This type of bed, as its name signifies, is literally in a box, but the box is of enormous size and extends from floor to ceiling, and the lid instead of being on the top is on the side fronting the room, and takes the form of double doors that fold back to give convenient entrance. The idea is that you can step in, pull the doors to, and prepare for bed without its making any

difference whether the room is occupied or not. After you are under the clothes you push the door open and get some air to breathe.

Old-fashioned people believe that the box bed has special advantages in time of sickness ; for if the patient wishes quiet and darkness, it is only necessary to close the doors and the invalid is shut away from the outer world completely, with no trouble at all.

In the kitchen that I have described the telegraph boy, Jimmie, and his granddaughter cooked, ate, washed, made their toilets—did everything. But Jimmie was satisfied. He said a doctor had told him that people who slept in a box bed and had a thatch roof overhead and a dirt floor underfoot lived the longest. He was much interested in the "States," and said he had two daughters over there, one in Meriden, Con., and the other in Mish. I don't know what he thought Con. and Mish. were, but I recognized Connecticut and Michigan.

My final sight of Jimmie was on the last evening of my stay in Kirriemuir. I was in the stationer's shop on the square when the old man came in and held out a grimy hand for me to shake. His face was red, for he had been having a dram or two, and he was inclined to take a dismal view of life. He'd only had "one telegram the week, only a saxpence, and a man could no live on that."

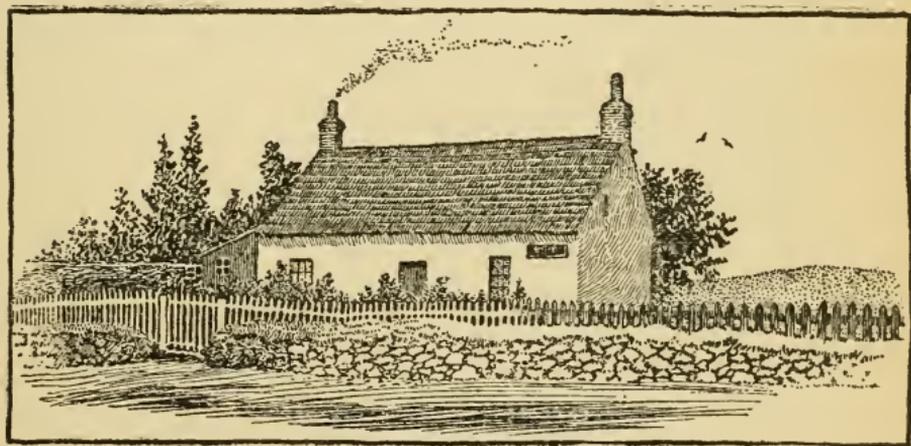
The stationer offered him his snuff-box, and Jimmie took a pinch, but it did not revive his spirits, and his farewell to me was full of dubious foreboding.

“I shall never see you again,” he said.

“Oh, perhaps you may,” I responded, with an attempt at cheerfulness.

“Will you come next year?” he inquired. “But I won’t be here if you do,” he added. “I’ll be in hell then.”

He shook hands once more, said “Good-by,” and went out on the street.



The Window in Thrums House

VII

A HIGHLAND GLEN



Returning from Market

ITS name was Glen Clova, a title suggestive of rural sweetness and overflowing fertility. The reality was a wide fissure opening back into the great bounding heather hills, and its name was almost its only touch of gentleness. Yet there was charm in the little river Esk which wound through the meadow bottoms, and the vastness of the encompassing hills was impres-

sive, while even the lonely bareness of the region was of its kind beautiful.

The glen's remoteness was attested to my senses in many ways — by the peatstacks I found in the farmyards, by the presence of the wild deer on the high

moors, by the snow-banks which glistened white in the ravines of the craggy mountains until midsummer, and by the peewits and the water-birds which screamed at me when I walked about the fields, as if wholly unused to the sight of a stranger. The district was very destitute of trees, though frequent newly started "plantings" covered great patches of the upland. Small woods were numerous outside the valley, southward; but at the time of my visit a good share of the trees in these woods had been blown over by a terrible gale of the year before. The power of the storm had been such that it made even the heaviest stone dwellings tremble, frightening the people, tearing slates from roofs, shattering byres, and turning over the cornstacks in the stackyards. The morning after the gale some of the woods on the exposed ridges had not a tree left standing. Even now, a twelvemonth later, much of the woodland wreckage had not yet been cleared away, and it was a melancholy sight—these tangles of dead branches and shattered trunks, and the earth all turned up edgewise with the canting of the roots.

I found lodging while I stayed in the glen at a farmhouse under a rough spur of one of the great hills known as Craig Eggie. The best room in the house was mine as long as my sojourn lasted. The room was one the family was inclined to boast of, and Mrs. Fearn, the farmer's wife, wanted to know if we had

any better than that in America. It was an eminently respectable room, with a carpet, wall-paper, pictures, etc. — indeed, was much like a New England sitting room, except for the presence of a bed and a small fireplace. At the foot of the bed stood a tall clock. This clock was just half an hour behind time, and was also original in having a habit five minutes before it struck the hours of giving forth a peculiar sound as if something heavy had broken in the works and fallen down inside the case. When heard in the night the sound was quite startling.

The evening of my first day in the glen was so chilly that after I had eaten supper in the best room I was glad to sit by the kitchen fireplace and watch the brisk flames crackling up from a heap of peat bricks while the wind hummed and rumbled in the chimney. The black teakettle suspended from the sway was adjusted low over the fire, and the water within boiled with such vigor that the cover rattled.

On a rude bench behind an equally rude table at the far end of the room sat the hired man sucking in hot tea from his saucer. Under the table lay a black and white collie. Several hams and sides of bacon tied up in white bags were hung from hooks driven into the blotchy yellow ceiling. The women felt that this stained ceiling was something of a reproach; but they said it was of no use to whitewash it, for the

peats were smoky things, particularly in dull, damp weather, and the ceiling would keep grimy and unsightly, no matter what they did. The walls were more easily managed, and they were tidy with a pink whitewash renewed twice a year. The daughter of the house, a bright, energetic body named Mary Ann, did the whitewashing, and it was she who gave the long hearthstone before the fire periodical coats of bright blue paint, and made the stone framework of the fireplace and the wooden mantel above shine with applications of black varnish. The corner-stones at the base, supporting the bars of the grate, she polished daily with black lead, while the inner sides of the fireplace, above the grate, she whitewashed every week, leaving just a narrow black path in the middle where the smoke coursed upward.

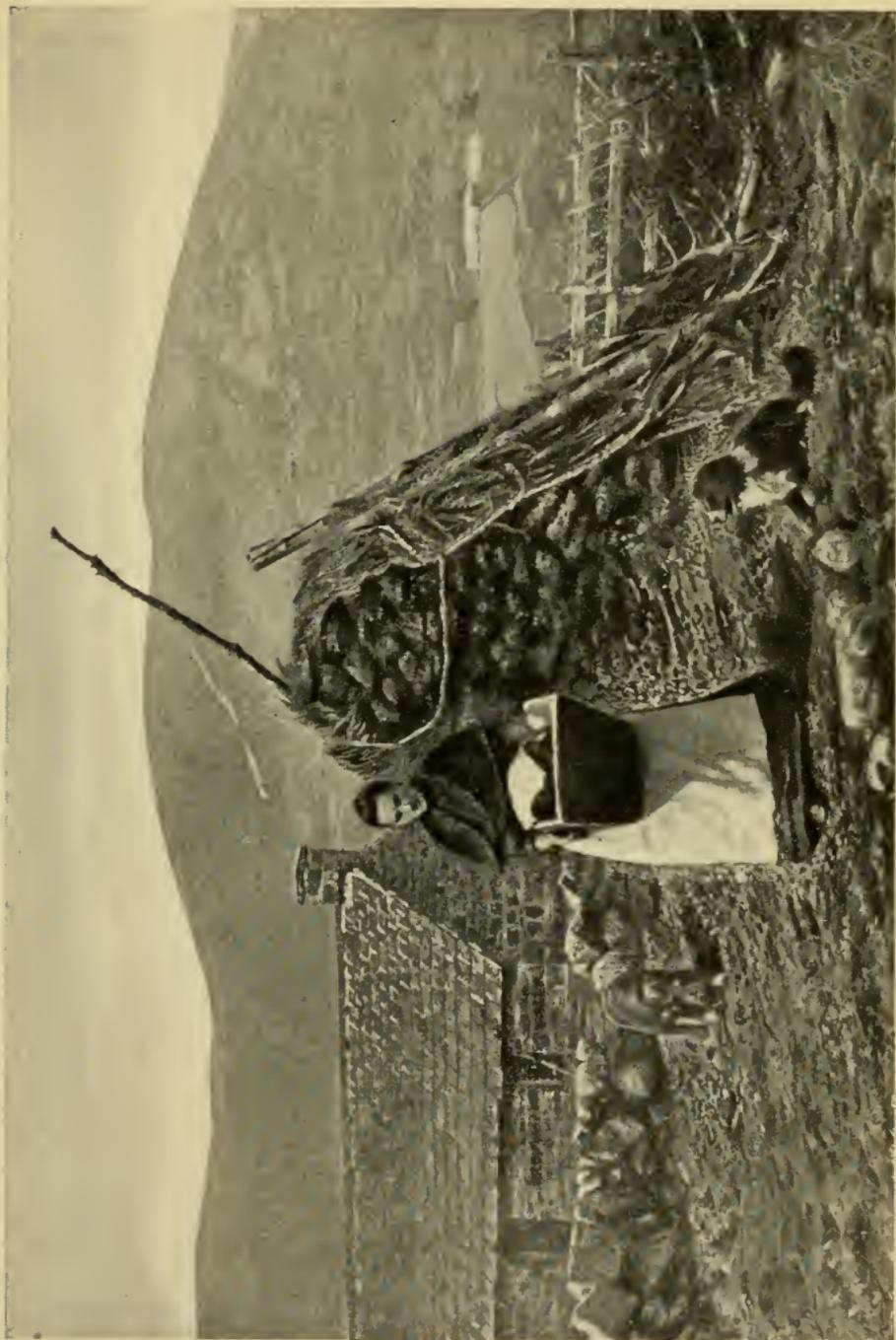
Spring water, conducted through a pipe from its hillside source, came directly into the room, but "the big half" of the Glen Clova families had to go out to a running well (brook) for their water, and often were obliged to carry it quite a distance.

While I sat talking with the family, the fire had been allowed to burn low, and now the stout mistress of the house went out to the peatstack in the yard and brought in a fresh supply of the brown blocks in her apron. She put some of the peat on the fire and dumped the rest down on the hearth. Then she

broke up some dry brush, tucked it into the grate, and sat down to encourage the slumbering flames with a pair of bellows. Immediately the fire brightened, and the air grew odorous with wisps of smoke that stole out into the room.

Mrs. Fearn said the supply of bannocks was running short, and she must make more. Bannocks are flat, brittle cakes of oatmeal, as large around as a plate. In thickness and color they suggest sections of coarse sole leather, and no one unacquainted with them would suspect that they were good to eat. Their preparation consists in stirring up oatmeal with water into a thick dough, rolling lumps of it out into shape and then "firing" the rough disks one at a time in the fireplace. I do not mean, as the American vernacular would suggest, that the cakes were consigned forcibly to the flames. The term "firing," as applied to a bannock in Scotland, means first browning the under side on a griddle, and then setting it up edgewise on a toaster hung before the blaze, and letting the other side brown. When spread with butter and accompanied by a bit of cheese and a glass of milk or a cup of tea, the bannocks are so good that even an epicure would not disdain them. I think the Scotch feel a real pity for a person who does not eat them regularly, and love them.

During my stay in the glen I had bannocks at every meal, and, besides the accessories that naturally go with



THE PEAT-STACK IN THE YARD

the cakes, I was given heather honey for a relish. The honey was in the honeycomb, and it was wonderfully rich, and tasted full of sunshine and blossoms. The bees gather the finest harvest of the year in the time of the heather-bloom. The clover honey that they make earlier is not nearly so deep in tint nor so densely sweet. Nor does it bring as much, when sold, into "tuppence" a pound.

The day's work in the glen began at five o'clock. Mrs. Fearn and her daughter were always stirring by that time. The mother went at once to the byre to start milking the eight cows, but Mary Ann stayed indoors to kindle the kitchen fire, and hang over it a great black pot full of oatmeal. Then she skimmed the milk in the dairy, and when the porridge was cooked and the tea boiled for the men's breakfast, she went out to help her mother finish milking.

The cattle of the region were of a hornless variety, usually black, but sometimes gray or patched with white. The cows received very good care, and they, of all the farm animals, were the only ones that were invariably kept in the byres over night right through the year. It was thought to be too "cauld" for them in the fields, though during the warmer months the calves and horses were allowed to stay out continuously, and the sheep were not housed, even in winter. The sheep pastures were in the main bare grassland, or

heather hillsides ; but it was arranged that there should be a patch of woodland somewhere in the pasturage to which they could retire for shelter from the storms. If the winter was mild, the sheep might be able to pick up their own living, yet ordinarily they required some feeding.

Raising calves was an important industry in the glen, and Farmer Fearn had quite a herd of them. Mary Ann fed them three times a day, the last time about nine or ten in the evening. She usually went out bareheaded, with a red shawl wound about her shoulders. While milking or doing dirty kitchen work, the women added greatly to their picturesqueness by tucking their outer skirts up so that the folds only came halfway down.

When they found I was interested in Scotch ways, they were at great pains to give me information, and they brought out for exhibition their photograph albums, and their hats and bonnets, and Mr. Fearn's best suit, and the cheese tub, and much else. I related something of our American customs, and they were of the opinion that if the women here did no outdoor work, and never milked, and never blacked the men's boots, they must sit by the fire and "rockit" a large part of the time. Mary Ann wanted I should tell the American girls that they did not do half enough.

Mr. Fearn paid a rent on his farm, to the Laird who owned all the hills and glens for miles around, of £150 a year. The farm consisted of eighty acres and a "butt." The eighty acres were rolling valley land. The butt was thin, heathery pasturage, "mostly steens" (stones), the farmer affirmed, that swept up a steep hillside and far on across a peat bog.

"It is no easy getting a living here," Mr. Fearn explained, and he added that his hired help worked shorter hours and had more to show for their labor at the end of the year than he had. In cold seasons he could not ripen his corn (oats) enough so that the grain could be used for seed, and there were times when the little river Esk overflowed and stood like a loch in the meadows and "drowned" all the corn on the lowland. This year there had been white frosts in June after the potatoes were up two or three inches, and every stalk was blackened and withered down to the ground. A belated scarecrow was still standing in one of Mr. Fearn's potato fields. It was made out of old clothes stuffed with hay, and it had its arms extended, and an old hat fastened on top just like one of our scarecrows at home. But you would not find a scarecrow in a potato field with us. The rooks "howk" out the "tatties" in Scotland when their green sprouts first break up through the earth, and you may often see one of the black thieves carrying

off a recently planted tuber in its bill. In Glen Clova they called a scarecrow a "tattie-dooley," which, translated, means a potato-bogey.

Late one afternoon I climbed up Mr. Fearn's butt of moor and over the rocky riggin (ridge) of the hill to a wide marsh. Scattered about the high waste were a few sheep feeding on the sparse grasses, but there were not enough of them to soften much the loneliness of the spot with the great heather hills glooming all about. The farmer had finished cutting peat here only the day before, and where the dark banks had been laid bare, I could see that the bog was full of large roots and pieces of tree trunks — plainly it must once have been wooded. Good-sized oaks are found in some bogs, black with the peat stain to their hearts. The wood is perfectly sound, but it cracks badly when exposed to the air, and is not of much use except for fence posts, though in small pieces, carved and polished, it has value in the form of ornaments.

The region around Glen Clova is good hunting ground, and the Laird let it for the winter shooting of grouse to a London gentleman at £500 a season. This sum was sufficient to make every brace of grouse the Londoner shot cost him a guinea. Back on the hills was a deer "forest" that covered many square miles. The winter previous had been very cold and snowy, and the wild creatures had a hard time of it. The



“A TATTIE DOOLY”

grouse came in hundreds down to the roadway in the glen, and they would light in flocks on the stacks in the stackyards. The partridges and the crows were very familiar, too. Rabbits and hares would come close to the houses, and in the morning, after a snow, the dooryards would be padded all over with their foot-marks. The deer descended from their native upland, and the farm folk would see them stringing along at the foot of the brae in the pastures. The farmers did not care to have them get into their turnip fields, and they would go out with their guns and frighten them back to the high moors. The creatures were "near deid wi' starvation," or they would not have ventured into the valley at all. Mr. Fearn killed a dozen of them and salted down their meat. The schoolmaster shot one right at the corner of the schoolyard, and for several nights he slept with his gun on his bed, ready for another. The deer spoiled a young planting of seven hundred acres of spruce, larch, and fir by getting into it and biting off the tops of the little trees. The planting was fenced, but deer are famous jumpers, and when urged by hunger, no protection short of six feet high would daunt them.

At Craig Eggie the road down the valley was not passable to teams for nine weeks in midwinter, and Clova village, three miles above, was cut off from the world a week longer. Yet school kept as usual, and

though some of the scholars lived at a considerable distance, the snow made little difference in the attendance. Glen Clova children are hardy, and save for the two or three smallest ones, they waded daily back and forth through the drifts.

Very few of the scattered homes of the glen were so placed as to have near neighbors, and the only village cluster was up the valley at Clova, where were a church, a white manse, a hotel, and several small dwellings. The people from all the region around came every Sunday to attend service at the little church, some in gigs and dogcarts, but the large majority on foot.

Years ago the glen was much more fully populated, and I everywhere came across the broken walls of old-time houses. One spot was pointed out to me where had been a group of thirty dwellings less than half a century before. Now there were only two — a farmhouse and the lodge of a game-keeper. The vanished homes had been mostly cotter houses, each with its little farm of three or four acres on which the cotter raised tatties and corn, and pastured his cow. In the cotter's kitchen of those bygone days, besides the one or two beds and other necessary furniture, would be a hand-loom. During the winter this was rarely idle, and it was more or less in use the year through. The cloth woyen in these country houses was sold to a manufacturer in the nearest large town. When machine



“A TATTIE DOOLY”

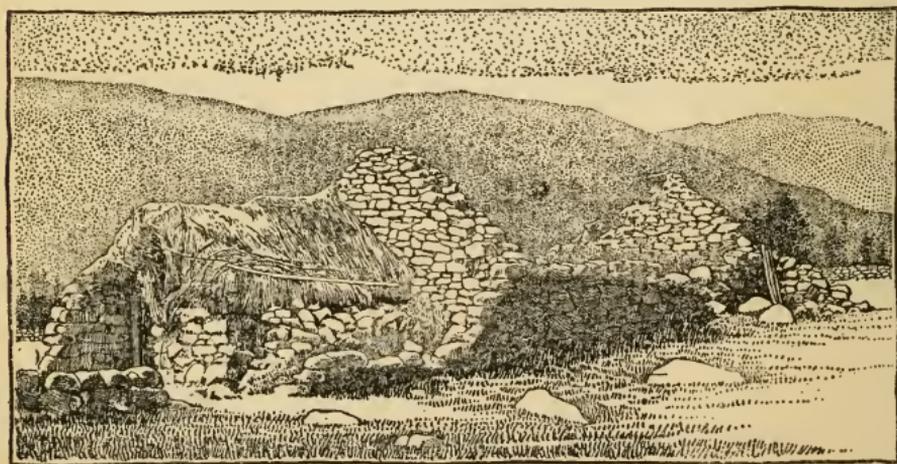
weaving began to be general, the cotters found it difficult to support their families wholly on the produce of the little farms, and they were obliged to seek the mills in the cities.

The development of machinery and the country isolation has depopulated rural Scotland everywhere. One result is that it is not easy for the farmers to get help in the more remote districts. The laborers drift to the towns now more persistently than do the middle classes. Nor can one blame them, when one considers how they must live as agriculturists.

A man hired out to a farmer, in addition to his wages, is allowed a flagon of milk daily and seventy pounds of oatmeal a month. The eating arrangements are simplicity itself. He sits down to the table with a deep plate full of porridge and a bowl of milk before him, and with his horn spoon dips up, alternately, porridge and milk, until he reaches the bottom of the dishes. There are no further courses, and there is no variation in breakfast, dinner, and supper. Indeed, this is the bill of fare the year through in the more backward districts. But such plain living is not as satisfactory as it once was, and the man is very apt to sell part of his meal and get tea and an occasional piece of meat or loaf of bread.

On the old-fashioned farms an unmarried laborer usually has a dwelling to himself—a little “placie”

of one room known as a "bothy." Often three or four laborers inhabit the tiny stone-walled hovel together. Each man has a kist for his clothes and other personal belongings, and a second kist for his oatmeal. A table, a few chairs, a kettle, a pot, and a water-pail complete the furnishings of the bothy. The man who lives in his employer's household has his allowance of meal and milk just the same as if he dwelt outside, but the farmer's wife does his cooking, and he is very likely given such extras as the family itself eats. Still, even at best, I did not wonder that laborers failed to find life on the isolated farms attractive, nor did it seem strange that the lonely glens were gradually being deserted by the farmers themselves.



Ruins of a Cotter's Home

VIII

LOCHS AND BENS



Water from the Well

LAKES and mountains abound throughout the Highlands to an extent that in many sections leaves little else. Very few areas of any size have escaped the general upheaval, and such aspects of gentleness as these northern regions display are usually confined to nooks and corners. Of this country of the lochs and bens no district possesses more charm in itself and in its literary and historic associations than that which contains Lochs Katrine and Lomond, and, like most visitors to Scotland, I succumbed to the attraction of these twin lakes, and early one evening

took a coach at Callander, the end of the railway line, to go through the Trossachs. The name Trossachs means bristled region, that is, a region of rocks, forest, and craggy mountain ridges, thrown together in rude disorder; and this very aptly describes not a little of the landscape neighboring Katrine and Lomond.

The coach was a great high affair with four seats running crosswise of its upper story, each intended to accommodate four persons. Every one wanted to mount aloft to get the benefit of the view, and the body of the conveyance was simply a hollow storage compartment for baggage. The place on a coach most coveted by the passengers is the front seat with the driver. Thence you get an unimpeded outlook and a chance to chat with the man who holds the reins and pick up information. On this trip two hustling Americans snapped up the sittings on the front seat. One was a gray little man with a toothless lisp. The other was his wife, a ponderous, red-faced woman who was scarcely less intent than her husband to gobble up first places. As soon as the coach drove up to the station these two were right on hand, elbowing through the crowd, and their use of physical force and liberal tips to porters and driver, made it hopeless for any one else to compete with them.

There were two other typical Americans on the load who at once made themselves apparent. They were a



A MOUNTAIN STREAM

young man and a young woman, and it did not take much penetration to decide they were on their wedding-trip. The young man came briskly out of the station soon after the train arrived, and walked all around the coach to see if there were vacant seats. He had assumed an air intended to impress one that he was an experienced traveller, but no one took any stock in that, unless it was "Clara," his wife. Still we liked him. There was nothing mean and crowding about him as there was in the front seat couple. We had no trouble in discovering his wife's name, for he was not at all timid in his tones, and he spoke to be heard, on all occasions, no matter whom he addressed. "You get up on that seat, Clara," he would say, "and I'll get up here." Then later, "Are you all right, Clara," etc., etc., always loud and distinct, and Clara's name tacked on to every sentence. He did all he could, in the way of conversation and little attentions, to make Clara enjoy herself, and she seemed quite appreciative.

Much of our journey was along the side of Loch Vennachar, with heather hills round about and Ben Venue's ragged summit looking down on us from the west. Toward eight o'clock we reached "The Trosachs Inn," a great, lonely stone hotel which, with its wings and turrets, looked like the mansion of some wealthy nobleman. In front of the inn the land

sloped down in pleasant meadows to Loch Achray. Behind it the hills climbed steep and high. I had the good fortune to be assigned to a room in one of the hotel turrets, with windows that overlooked the country for miles. Best of all, the view included Ben Venue in the distance, lifting its calm heights far into the sky.

Early the next morning I started for a walk up the valley. The road wound through a forest in which graceful, round-plumed birches were predominant, though occasional oaks and other trees were not lacking. The woodland was quite enchanting with the rank-growing ferns underneath, and the continual glimpses of lofty hills and mountain peaks. Now and then I saw a rowan tree brightening the wood with its clusters of scarlet berries, and again a high cliff would shoulder into view, its top overflowing with pink heather bloom. Once, in a marshy open, a red deer lifted its startled head, watched me a moment, and then bounded away with short, hoarse barks of alarm. Sometimes a rabbit scudded across the roadway ahead, or I caught a momentary glimpse of a bushy-tailed red squirrel whisking up a tree, and these various denizens of the woodland added greatly to the sylvan charm.

Thus I went on, up and down the little hills through the ferny forest, till a turn in the road

brought into sight the waters of Loch Katrine reaching back in blue inlets among the tree-crowned cliffs of its shores. In one of the little bays lay a steamer with a lazy wisp of smoke drifting up from its black chimney. It seemed out of place, and almost as sacrilegious as does the conveyance of the waters of this loch of romance through twenty-five miles of iron pipe to supply the city of Glasgow. But the lake water is remarkably pure, and what romance loses, the crowded humanity of the great town gains.

I kept to the road that skirted the eastern shore for a mile to the famous "Silver Strand." This is no more than a bit of white, pebbly beach, hooking out into the loch, yet it has a fascinating interest from its connection with Scott's "Lady of the Lake," and the spot itself is delightful. Southward the giant Ben Venue loomed skyward in treeless heather, and slopes of emerald turf, and outcropping crags of gray rock. Behind me were woods where the birds sang and where the sunshine glinted irregularly through the leafage to the green undergrowth of grasses and bracken. The day was warm and quiet, with a sky of cloudless blue. Only enough wind stirred to make the leaves whisper and the pendant branches of the birches sway, and to keep a pleasant rippling of little waves along the shore.

Not far away was the Isle of the Lady of the Lake,

rising above the water in a rocky knoll, wholly covered with trees, just as Scott described it —

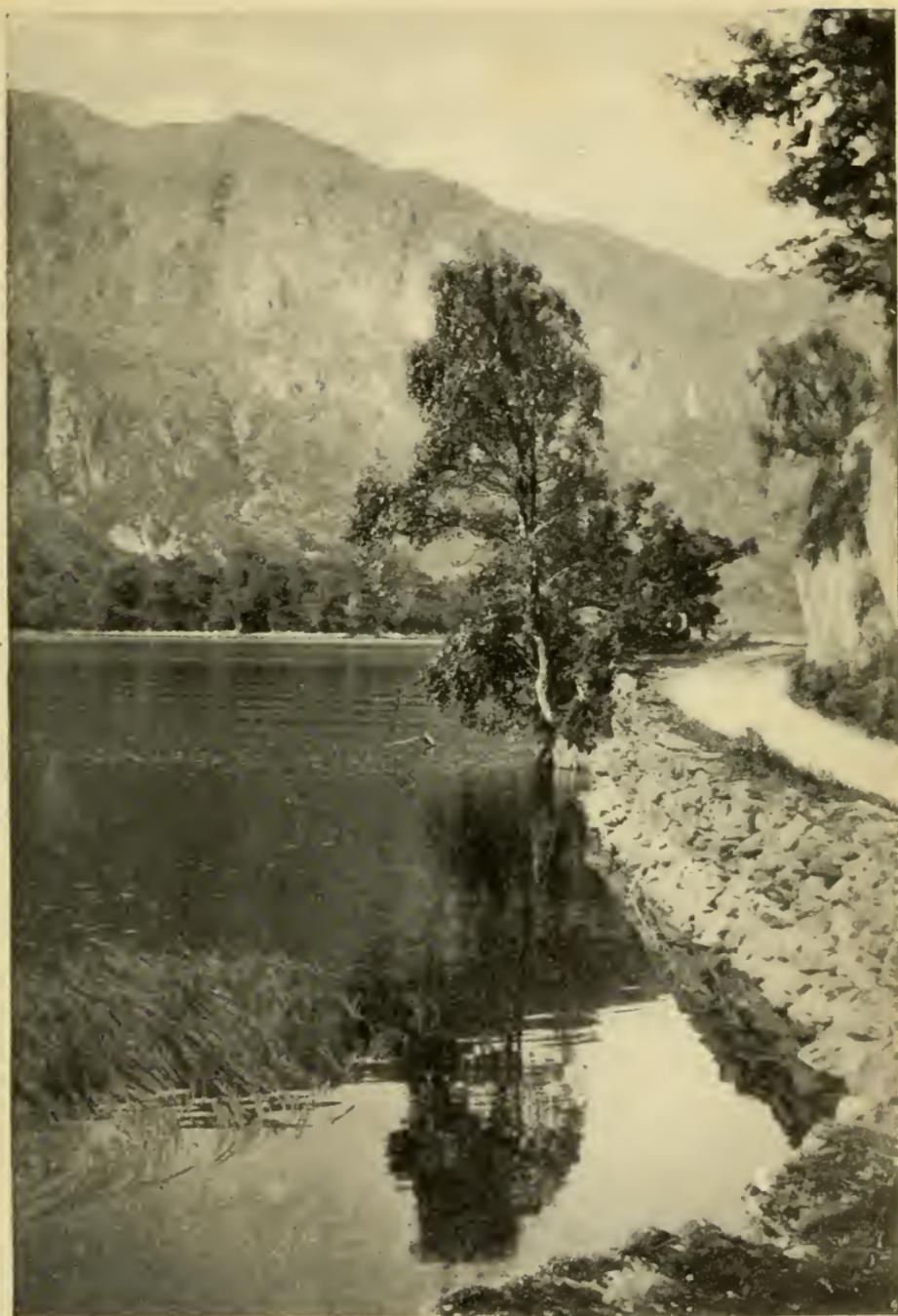
. . . . “all so close with copse-wood bound,
Nor track nor pathway might declare
That human foot frequented there.”

Of course the poet drew freely on his imagination in telling the story, and yet it is not at all unlikely that

“ Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,
Some chief had framed a rustic bower ; ”

for the situation of the isle well accords with such use; the old Celtic chieftains, their lives continually exposed to peril, were accustomed to have a secret domicile ready in as strong and easily defended a spot of the most retired part of their domains as could be selected. It might be a cave, but, more often, a tower or rude hut was erected.

The plot of the poem is not, however, dependent on these general possibilities. It has a modicum of genuine historic foundation. The facts are these — a troop of Cromwell's cavalry had made a raid into the Trossachs, and the local Highlanders had carried all their most valuable property to this little island in Loch Katrine, and left it there in the care of the women and children. The soldiery learned of what the natives had done, and came to the borders of the



LOCH KATRINE AND BEN VENUE

lake; but they could discover no means of getting out to the islet. While they were debating the difficulty, a trooper with sharper eyes than his fellows noticed a boat moored under one of the island cliffs, and he volunteered to swim across and get it. If they could possess themselves of the boat, access to the isle would be easy, and they were sure to gain a rich reward of plunder. The man was a good swimmer, his progress was rapid, and his comrades soon saw him nearing the island. But as he was about to set his foot on land, a woman armed with a sword appeared and smote off his head, and his lifeless body fell back into the water. His fellow-soldiers in great dismay and anger vainly discharged their guns toward the island, yet none of them ventured any further attempt to secure the boat. Shortly they withdrew, and left the possessors of the islet undisturbed. The name of the woman who by her valor saved the refuge from the invaders was Helen Stewart, and it was christened in her honor Helen's Isle. Fiction, however, has proved more powerful than fact, and the island is now much more distinctly connected with the name of Ellen Douglas than with that of Helen Stewart.

When I retraced my steps along the borders of the loch I found the brisk little steamer fast filling with passengers, and soon it cast loose, and we were off for the other end of the lake. During the first part of the

journey the shores rose in wooded precipices and the mighty Ben Venue looked down from near at hand, and, better still, we passed close by the wild little Ellen's Isle. Later the country turned milder, and on either side were simply great grazing hills, sweeping far upward in green, unwooded slopes.

We arrived at our destination in the course of an hour. The steamer was lashed to a pier, and we all hurried off to get a choice of seats on the three big coaches that stood waiting on the near highway. These were to take us six miles over the hills to Inversnaid on Loch Lomond, and each vehicle had four horses and a red-coated driver and liveried footman. The route led through a deserted country of heather-clad uplands, where the only life was the groups of feeding sheep. Presently we began the descent toward Lomond by sharp loops of the steepest sort of roadway. The brakes were set tight, and scraped and jarred, but the horses kept on at a trot, and when the driver swung his whip and let the long lash cut through the air, they broke into a spurt of galloping. The passengers braced their feet and imagined what would happen if anything gave way, or if we met a team as we turned one of the wooded curves. The drive and these imaginings were the more exhilarating by reason of a deep ravine whose precipitous edges were skirted by the narrow road for the final mile or two.

Our journey's end was a steamer wharf at the edge of the loch, with a big hotel just up the hill. As the coaches came to a standstill two men with bagpipes began to march back and forth in front of the hotel, playing away with ardor enough for a whole orchestra. We were also welcomed by three bareheaded gypsies—a frouzy woman and two girls,—each of whom accosted such of the travellers as they could waylay with the words, “Please gie me a penny, sir, to buy a cup o’ tea wi’, sir,” in the most plaintive of tones.

Rob Roy, that most noted of outlaws since Robin Hood, owned property in Inversnaid, and had a cave not far away to the north on the border of the lake, where he sometimes took refuge when hard pressed. All the region around is full of associations with this wild chieftain. Mediævalism was not extinct in the Highlands until the middle of the eighteenth century, and Rob Roy flourished here less than two hundred years ago. He was born about 1660, in Glen Gyle, at the head of Loch Katrine; and in Balquidder, a little farther north, he lies buried, and his gravestone, with a sword roughly carved on it, can be seen there in the churchyard.

He was of the hardy, unruly clan of the Macgregors, whose very name was outlawed so that its members were obliged to add some other appellation. Thus Rob Roy's full name was Robert Macgregor Camp-

bell. Roy, meaning red, was simply a nickname suggested by the color of his hair and his ruddy complexion. In person he was unusually strong and compact, with great breadth of shoulders and very long arms, and he was a master in the use of the Highland sword. But, more potent as a safeguard than bodily strength or skill with weapons, was his intimate knowledge of all the recesses of the rough country in which he harbored. This was admirably suited to his purposes. It was broken up into narrow valleys, and the habitable parts bore no proportion to the huge wildernesses of forest, rocks, and bogs by which they were encircled. A few men acquainted with the ground and well led were capable of baffling the pursuit of numbers.

Rob was not always an outlaw, and for a considerable period was favorably known as a dealer in cattle. No lowland or English drovers in those days would venture into the roadless northern hills and mountains, and the cattle, which were the staple commodity of the uplands, were driven down to border fairs by parties of Highlanders with their arms rattling about them. Disputes and fights sometimes occurred; but in the main the trading was done peaceably and in all honor and good faith. While engaged in this cattle traffic in early manhood Rob Roy became a trusted agent in purchase and sales for his powerful neighbor, the



A COACH TO LOMOND

Duke of Montrose. He maintained herds of his own in a glen north of Loch Lomond; and because he often suffered loss from marauders dwelling among the hills still more to the north, he organized a company of armed men. He not only protected his own flocks, but those of all the dwellers in his vicinity, for which service he levied a tax. At length came a time when, through unfortunate speculations and the dishonesty of a partner, he was rendered totally insolvent, and the Duke of Montrose, to whom he was deeply in debt, seized his estates.

Rob himself got away and collected a band of twenty followers. Then he proceeded to annoy, by every means in his power, the duke, and all that nobleman's tenants, friends, allies, and relatives. But Rob did not confine his attentions to them. Under one pretence or another he raided all his neighbors of the lowlands who had anything to lose, unless they bought security by an annual payment. In spite of his calling he was after a manner benevolent and humane rather than cruel and ferocious. He avoided bloodshed as much as possible, and was liberal in relieving the poor, of whom there was no lack, owing largely to Rob Roy himself and other depredators of his kind; for the lawlessness of the region discouraged industry, and there was little culture of the ground and no manufactures or trade.

The robber chief never stirred without a body-guard of ten or twelve picked followers, and when he chose he increased this number to fifty or sixty. He rarely had any trouble in eluding or driving off the expeditions sent against him, and on the one or two occasions when he was captured, he quickly escaped. If he suffered any serious damage, he without delay revenged himself. For instance, when his house was burned, he made a descent on the factor of the Montrose family who was on a rent-collecting tour, and carried off all the money the man had gathered, to the last shilling. Rob's usual method, however, of levying on the duke's rentals was much more matter-of-fact. To a considerable extent the tenants paid in grain, and storehouses were established at various points for its reception. Rob Roy was in the habit of helping himself to such quantities of grain as he pleased, sometimes for his own use, sometimes for the assistance of needy country people; but he never failed to give regular receipts for what he took, pretending that he was going to reimburse the duke for it later.

As he advanced in years he became more peaceable, and the duke, who had found offensive measures ineffectual, stopped harrying the Macgregors, and to such of them as would settle down he gave leases at a low rental. The result of the duke's clemency in the case of Rob Roy was that toward the close of his life he dwelt un-



A COACH TO LOMOND

disturbed under his own roof, and about the year 1733 he died in his own bed in the parish of Balquidder.

His temper was not without fire to the very last. During his final illness it was announced to him by members of his family that a certain person with whom he was at enmity had come to visit him. "Raise me from my bed," commanded the sick man, "throw my plaid around me and bring my claymore and pistols. It shall never be said that a foeman saw Rob Roy Macgregor defenceless."

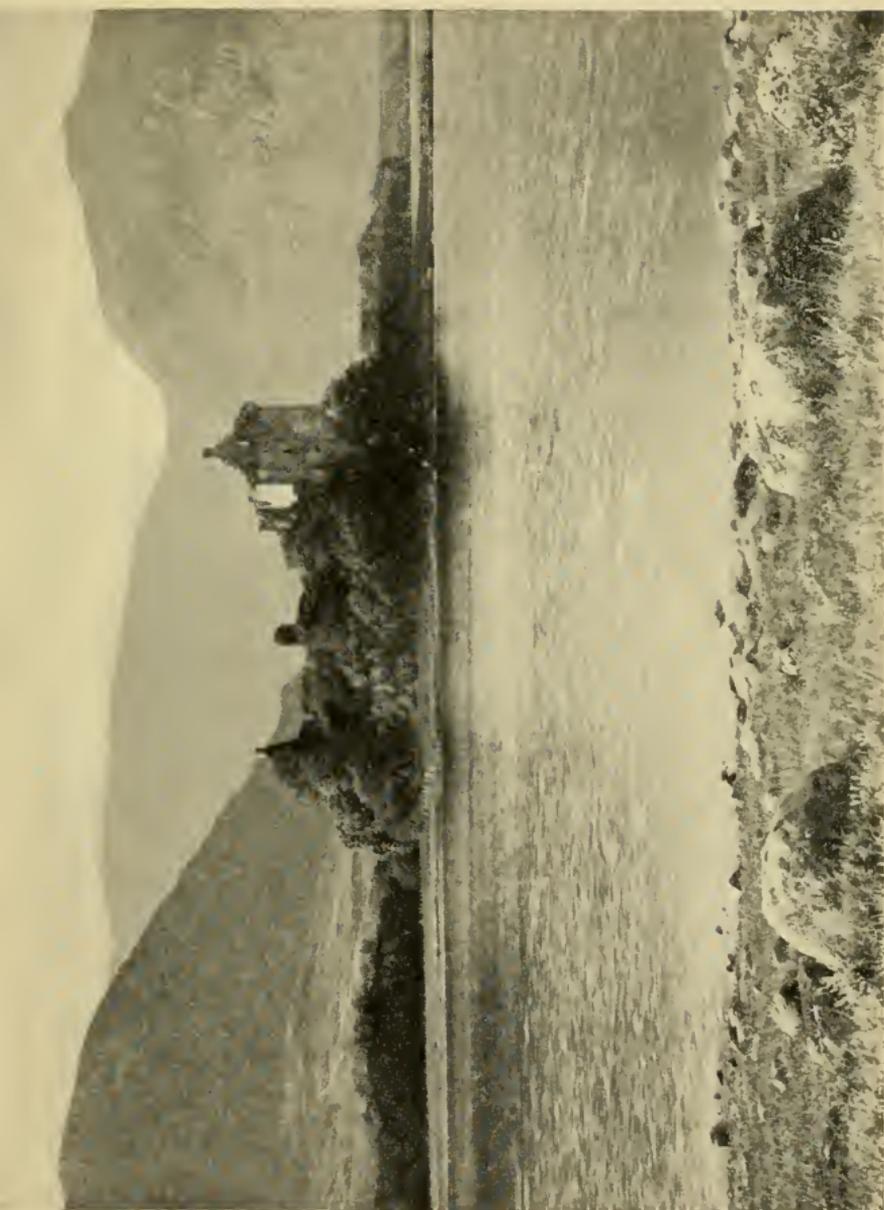
The visitor then entered and made friendly inquiry after Rob Roy's health, but the latter maintained a cold, haughty civility during the short conference. As soon as the caller had gone the old chieftain sank back, saying, "Now all is over. Let the piper play, 'We return no more.'"

The piper played, but before the quavering dirge was finished Rob Roy had expired; and when the news of his death spread, his loss was lamented far and wide in his own wild district.

When I prepared to leave Inversnaid, I sought the wharf, and looking toward the north saw approaching from among the mountains the black hull of a lake steamer overhung by a cloud of smoke. The surrounding scenery was on such a grand scale that the craft appeared to be very low and small—just a little blot on the waters; but it proved to be a very good-

sized double-decked vessel. Passengers hurried off, and other passengers hurried on, the big piles of trunks and boxes were rushed aboard, and we went on southward. The hills and mountains bordering were higher than on Loch Katrine, and much of the time we had in view the majestic Ben Lomond rising serenely above all its fellows. On the lower slopes of the heights were many gray-green acres of bracken, and in the ravines were waterfalls making white leaps down the steep declivities. Here and there patches of purple heather were coming into blossom, frequent woods of evergreen and copses of birch grew along the shores and in the little glens that furrowed the hillside, while in the lake itself were occasional small islands, on which could now and then be glimpsed a ruin hiding among the trees.

The voyage ended at the extreme lower end of the lake. Thence I continued a few miles south to Dumbar-ton, on the Clyde, where I planned to spend the night. A remnant of the day still remained, and after I had selected a hotel I went for a walk. Ship-building was plainly the chief industry of the place, and along the river were the great yards where all day long is to be heard the confused clamor of hundreds of hammers ringing on the iron hulls of half-built vessels. When I got glimpses into the enclosures I saw forests of upright timbers supporting the new vessels, and there



KILCHURN CASTLE ON LOCH AWE

were black foundries and workshops, tall, smoke-plumed chimneys, and an army of mechanics.

My ramble ended with a visit to the old castle perched on a great, rough, double-turreted cliff that rose steeply from the level banks of the river; and then I started to go back to my hotel. It was later than I had thought, and the working people had finished their suppers. The men were lounging in doorways or walking the streets, children were playing on the pavements, and many frowzled women were visiting at the entrance to their houses, or, if it happened to be more convenient, in the middle of the highway. There was abounding dirt and slovenliness. All the poorer children were barefoot, and so were many of the women, and it seemed to me that nearly every woman, even down to the young girls, had either coarse and wrinkled faces or bold and rude ones.

I had just returned to the main street, after threading through several of the byways, when I heard a noise of many voices and saw a turmoil of people approaching and filling the thoroughfare like a sudden flood. I hastened to the protection of a doorway and let the mob sweep past. In the front and centre were four men carrying a fifth on their shoulders, and the fifth man lay apparently lifeless, with a white face falling limply to one side. This grewsome vanguard hurried

on, with men, women, and children running after, and from every alley poured newcomers, till the whole town was alive with people, and I could not but wonder how such numbers could get together so quickly. The majority followed the injured man, but others gathered in excited groups, and all sorts of stories were circulated as to what the trouble was. One said the man had dropped in a faint, another that the bobby (policeman) had struck him and laid his head open with a club, another that he had been hit in fun by a friend.

Presently I went on, and entered the side street on which stood my hotel. To my surprise I found the crowds continually getting thicker and more excited. A particularly dense and uneasy mob was gathered in front of my hotel, and I had difficulty in forcing a way through. I was admitted at a side-gate by one of the women of the house who was looking out over the wicket, and from her I got the full story of the disturbance.

Jacob Primmer, an anti-papist of considerable fame, had been lecturing on the common. There were many Catholics among his hearers, and his denunciations so stirred them that they resorted to violence, and the orator had to be escorted to his hotel, which happened to be the very one I had chosen, in the midst of eleven policemen. Sticks and stones were thrown, and a stray

missile had struck and stunned the man I had seen carried along the main street. The mob outside thought Primmer would go to the railroad station later in the evening, and were waiting to assault him; but he disappointed them by staying at the hotel over night. I saw him when I went indoors — a brisk little man, getting gray and elderly. He looked harmless enough, and he seemed in no wise disconcerted by the riot he had brought about his ears.

It was not very agreeable stopping in a house beleaguered as mine was, but it was an interesting experience. The sounds that came from the street reminded me of the angry hum one hears within a beehive when it is given a disturbing rap. For an hour or so the crowd hung on, and then a street musician came along and played a merry tune on an accordion. That was a great help toward a peaceful dispersion, and I am inclined to think a good dose of pleasant melody would have a quieting effect on any mob.

The next morning I returned to Loch Lomond and sailed northward the full length of the lake. The steamer was thronged, and the day sunny. The men smoked, and the women read and chatted. At the piers, everywhere we stopped, buses and coaches and parties of pleasure-seekers were waiting, and each time as soon as we got under way again a boy made the

rounds of the deck with a basketful of guides, souvenirs, and photographs for sale.

At the head of the lake I exchanged the steamer for the railway, and by noon reached Dalmally, not far from another of the famous Scotch lochs with its attendant mountains. A visit to this loch was the pleasantest feature of my stay at Dalmally. It was four miles distant, a comfortable walk down a wide valley on a road that much of the way kept company with a little river lingering through drowsy lowlands. Though it was not yet mid-August, all the greens of woods and fields were lightened in the early morning of the day I walked to Loch Awe by a heavy white frost, and when the sun began to get high, the beech leaves shrivelled at their tips and looked scorched; but except for this I did not observe that the frost did any special harm. In time I sighted the lake basking in blue serenity beneath the quiet summer sky. Wandering breezes rippled its surface here and there into silver, and, well out in the midst, a lazy rowboat was paddling back and forth, its occupants intent on fishing. But what attracted the eye most was the beautiful ruin of Kilchurn castle. Its half-fallen walls rose above a little grove of attendant trees, and in the background was a lofty tumble of mountain ranges, with Ben Cruachan monarch of the peaks. The old castle was a gem, and I promptly turned my footsteps

in its direction. It lay beyond a long stretch of marshy meadows where a group of men and women were at work haymaking.

I approached the ruin, expecting to find it wholly forsaken to nature, and was a good deal surprised to come on a bevy of hens and chickens picking about under its walls, and to discover that the entrance was barred by a heavy oak door. On the door was a little sign, "Ring the bell," and I pulled a cord that dangled down close by. Soon I heard footsteps. The door was opened, and a middle-aged woman admitted me to the castle. As soon as I crossed the threshold I found myself in an ancient earthen-floored dungeon with a vaulted roof, for the entrance here was one cut through in recent years. The woman keeper of the fortress did not live in the ruin, but in an ivied cottage that had been built in a green court of the castle interior. There it was nestling under the old walls, with its chimney cheerfully smoking and giving a pleasant domestic touch to the historic ruin.

I explored the castle thoroughly, climbed its towers, followed its walls, looked up its cavernous chimneys; and then a shower came trailing down from Ben Cruachan. From the parapet of the fortress I saw the new-starting streams glisten in the high ravines of the mountain, and I watched them grow and glide with frequent foamy tumbles down the slopes. When the

shower struck the castle, I sought the dungeon at the entrance, opened the oaken door for the sake of light, and sat there looking out on the flying rain. The hens sidled up to the doorway from the coops under the near bushes and studied their chances for stealing into the apartment; but I blocked the way, and they sank discouraged heads between their shoulders, and stood just outside, with the water sliding in little rills off their tail-feathers. Tricklings from the rain above came down plentifully into the dungeon, and the furrows in the hard earth underfoot showed that in heavy downpours the streams must have run in small torrents clear across the sloping floor and out beneath the entrance door.

I might have found the dungeon a trifle tiresome, but the lady of the castle came to my relief and entertained me with some ancient lore of the region. There was a time, she said, when there was no Loch Awe at all — only a deep valley. In those days a race of giants inhabited the land, and the vale was filled with their flocks. Their home was on the lofty heights of Ben Cruachan, and they spent much of their time in hunting over the hills. In the valley was a spring which was mysteriously connected with the destinies of the giants, and it was their sacred duty neither to allow the last ray of the sun at eventide nor its first gleam in the morning to touch the water. To prevent this a

large stone was laid over the fountain just before sunset, and this was on no account removed until after sunrise the next morning.

For ages the spring was faithfully guarded; but the race gradually dwindled until only one remained to perform the task — a giantess of such mighty stature that she could step from the summit of one mountain to that of another at a single stride. One afternoon in the heat of midsummer, after a fatiguing day's hunt, she sat down to rest for a little. She recollected that she must soon descend into the valley to cover the spring, but the sun was high in the heavens, and there was no need of haste. Unfortunately, she fell asleep, and did not awake until the following morning. It was broad daylight, yet when the giantess looked about her she hardly knew where she was, so changed was the scene. A vast sheet of water now filled the vale, many of the lesser hills were changed to islands, and her flocks were all drowned. Such had been the result of leaving the spring uncovered for a single night. More than that, as she looked with dismay on the destruction she had caused, she felt her strength ebbing away, and knew she was doomed. In some occult manner her life was connected with the spring, and she soon lay dead on the high moorland. With her ended her race, and Loch Awe remains their sole memorial.

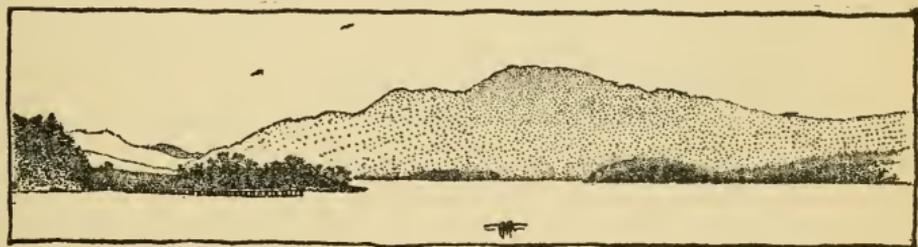
Another legend was of an island of the loch on

which was once an enchanted garden more beautiful than any other spot on earth. Golden apples hung ever fair on its trees, and a frightful dragon watched over them. Persons sailing past sometimes caught gleams of the golden fruit, and if the boat came at all near the isle, those on board were likely to see the dragon flapping the air with his tail and opening his enormous mouth significantly. While the garden on this island still bloomed, there lived on the slope of Ben Cruachan a fair maiden named Mego. She had everything a reasonable maiden could wish for, yet she was not happy. Nothing would do but she must have one of the dragon-guarded golden apples. So she ordered Frooch, her lover, to get one for her.

Frooch foolishly swore to do as she bid, and get the apple, dragon or no dragon. Accordingly he swam over to the island, and he and the dragon fought until the life was belabored out of both of them. Immediately the golden apples and the enchanted garden vanished, and the island became like other islands. As for the maiden, Mego, she pined away and died, but whether for lack of the coveted apple or in remorse for the loss of her brave lover, the lady of Kilchurn castle could not say.

The shower was past by the time these tales were finished, and I started back toward Dalmally. I lingered through the meadows where the tall grasses

hung heavy with water drops prismatic in the sunlight, and before I knew it, another storm was brewing among the mountain peaks, and its mists of falling rain were sweeping high and gray across the western sky. Then little shreds began to veil the near slopes, and, though I hastened, the first drops caught me in the open meadows. No house was near, and I ran to the protection of a railroad bridge, and sat and waited beneath it by the edge of the stream, with my back against the stone abutment. The storm was fierce while it lasted, but that was not long, and then I took the Dalmally road again.



Loch Lomond and Ben Lomond

IX

THE ISLE OF MULL



A Cottager piling Peat

WHEN I left Dalmally my destination was Oban on the west coast. The journey was all the way through the tumbled ridges of the Highlands, a part of the time high on the sides of the bare, rocky hills, and again crooking along low down in

the deep valleys. Often these valleys were just narrow defiles that left only room enough for the railway track, a cart path, and a stream. The brooks and rivers were swift and foamy, and there were many fishermen angling from their banks or wading about

in their rapid waters. One odd remembrance of the trip is of seeing three stalks of Indian corn growing in a flower-bed at the edge of the platform of a little way-side station. They were no doubt cultivated as semi-tropical curiosities, for the climate had not heat enough to mature ears.

Oban is a port of some importance, and carries on considerable traffic with the northwest coast and the outlying islands. It was late in the evening when I arrived, and though there were certain steamers still coming and going, the day's work was in the main done, and I looked out on a peaceful harbor where many little rowboats and numbers of larger craft lay rocking gently at anchor in the golden twilight.

I had come hither with intent to visit some of the Hebrides. Of the straggling line of isles that make up the Inner Hebrides, Mull is one of the largest and most easily accessible, and I decided to begin with that. It lies directly seaward from Oban, and is in plain sight. I only stayed in Oban over night, and then embarked on one of the small coasting steamers for an island village by the name of Craignure. It was a half-hour's journey. As we proceeded the island grew more distinct, and I could see that it was very rough, everywhere rising into misty mountains, some of the highest of which reached in dreamy blue far up into cloudland. On the lonely island shores

I now and then saw a house or an old ruin, but as a whole the outlook was so deserted and sombre it gave me a touch of homesickness.

I knew nothing of Craignure except that it had been recommended to me as picturesque and characteristic; and I was a good deal disconcerted when the captain told me to step down below to disembark. That meant Craignure was so minute a place the steamer did not go up to a pier, but signalled for a rowboat to come out to meet it. I glanced shoreward and saw a few houses dotted along just back from the beach, and I could see a boat with two men pulling at the oars leaving a small wharf. The steamer slowed up and churned the water with the backward dashing of its paddles, and when the rowboat approached, a rope was thrown to it. The little craft swung around beside the steamer, and in the stiff wind that was blowing it bobbed up and down on the waves and bumped against its ponderously swaying companion, offering a most uncertain foothold, I thought, as I looked out on it. No time was wasted. Two sailors took me by the arms and jumped me down, my luggage followed, and we cast loose and drifted astern. The steamer's paddles began to revolve, and the vessel was soon far away, while we labored over the waves toward the shore. The experience was a new and exciting one, and made my nerves tingle while it lasted.



CHURNING

I had been told there was a hotel at Craignure, and I had seen it from the steamer, stark and stiff, not far from where we were to land. It was a humble affair, and the sign across its front was so worn and faded as to be almost unreadable. I spoke to the boatmen about getting my luggage to the hotel, but they informed me that the building was vacant, and that its business had been discontinued for years.

Then what *could* I do?

Well, they didn't know; but I might try at "the lodge"; and they explained that all this part of the island was owned by a gentleman who had a mansion a mile back from the village, and the lodge of which they spoke was at the entrance to his park, only a short walk from the wharf. The woman living there had had some relative stopping with her, and this relative was going away that day, and perhaps now she could keep me.

The lodge proved to be a snug little cottage behind a fringe of trees standing just within the gates that guarded the entrance to the park driveway. A stout, talkative old lady, who had red cheeks, contrasting pleasantly with a white, frilled cap, met me at the door, and my spirits rose at once when she said her relative had gone and I could have his room. I did not go inside, but started instead for a ramble that, as it happened, occupied nearly all day.

There was little to keep me in Craignure village. It consisted of a small church, a white manse, and scarcely half a dozen other houses all told, and it was so extremely quiet that I was half inclined to think that all the inhabitants had departed with the relative of the lodge lady. I soon turned away from the village, entered the park, and followed its winding roadway back a long distance through woods and opens. This brought me in time to a great rusty mansion. Near it, where should have been lawn, was a big turnip field, surrounded by a barbed-wire fence, and the whole place was overhung with a strange and depressing air of dilapidation. Had some old tragedy cast its blight on the manor, I wondered, or was it the home of an unfortunate member of the gentry who was bankrupt?

I kept on past the mansion, and made a detour to get around an arm of the sea that stretched far inland; and a mile or two beyond that I came to a ruined castle on a cliff of the wild shore. It was a gloomy old wreck of mediæval grandeur, and appealed strongly to the imagination, and yet I was more interested in a cottage I visited close at hand. This cottage had a thatched roof and thick, low walls of stone, laid, not in mortar, but simply chinked with peaty turf. In one end of the dwelling lived a harmlessly insane man and his sister, in the other end a lone old woman;

though the entire structure was no larger than a moderate sized one-story ell of an American farmhouse.

By the side of a slender path leading down to a spring in a near hollow was a tiny garden barely two yards square. Here I found the old woman at work ; but when I questioned her about the house interior, she desisted and led the way to the door at her end. The door gave entrance to a dark apartment where she stored her peats. It was unfinished and windowless, and open to the crooked sticks and thatch of the roof. Adjoining it was the smallest living room I had ever seen — about twelve feet by six, and just high enough for a man of medium height to stand upright under the boards of the loft above. To pass beneath the supports of this upper floor, stooping was a necessity. A small fireplace jutted out into the room, and a bed, on which two cats were dozing, reached clear across the far end. There were chairs and stools, a table, a stand, and some meagre shelves of crockery, so that very little floor space was left. Picture papers were pasted plentifully over the walls to make the apartment warmer as well as more beautiful, and a diminutive window furnished light. The occupant had reached the age of eighty, she said, and she had an allowance from the parish, but in the main she paid her own way by hiring out to work in the fields.

I noticed when I left the ancient cottage that the

weather had turned more threatening. The mountain tops were hooded with mists, and these mists crept lower and lower down the ridges, until presently it began to rain. Not far away was a farmhouse, and I turned aside and hastened to it by a rough cart road, and rapped at the entrance to the kitchen. A woman responded, but when she saw I was a stranger, begged me to go around into the garden to the front door. There I was met and ushered into the best room. I explained how I happened to make this unexpected call, and the woman, with hospitable zeal, insisted that I must have some refreshment, and stepped out to prepare it.

While she was gone I looked about me. It was a stiff sort of room that I was in, apparently only invaded in housecleaning time, and on such special occasions as the present. The wall-paper was of an antiquated stripe, and the pictures were very old-fashioned, and included a sampler. Around the edges of the room a dozen or more chairs were arranged in frigid order, each with a tidy on its back. In one corner was a piano, and on a table were a variety of photographs and a few books.

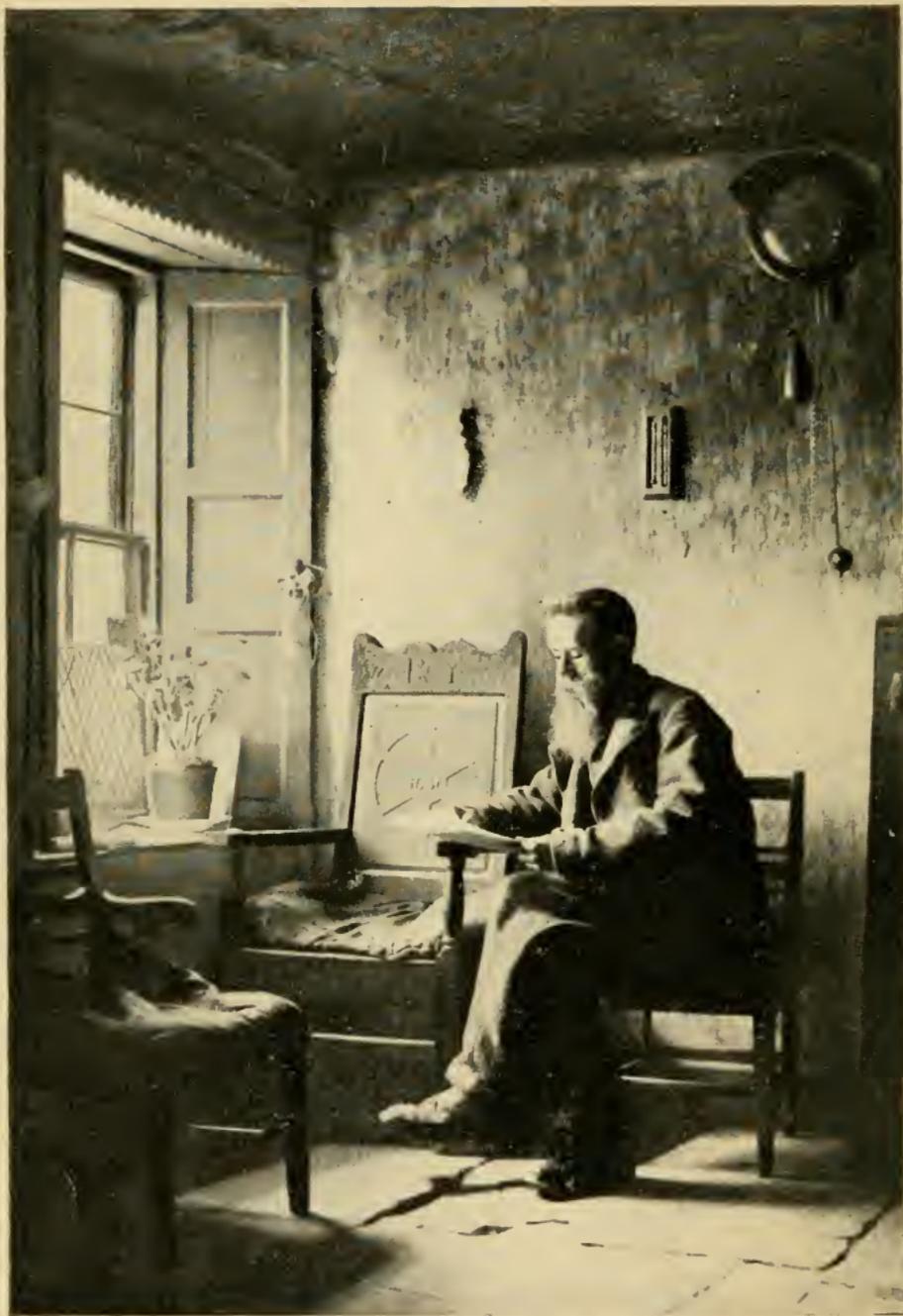
The woman soon returned, bearing a tray loaded with scones, butter, jelly, a pitcher of new milk, and a pot of tea. She had changed her gown, meantime, and had run down to the hayfield and called in her

brothers, Hugh and John. They were now in the kitchen making themselves presentable; but in a few minutes they came to the parlor. I stayed fully two hours, and these farm-folk never flagged in their kindly attentions, and gave up nearly the whole time to making things pleasant for me. They could not have done more had I been a friend of a lifetime; and they expressed the wish that I had come to Kilpatrick Farm to stay instead of stopping at the lodge, adding that they could have made me very bean (comfortable). They told me about the photographs on the table and the pictures on the wall, and John stood in a chair and took down the sampler that I might see it closer. The woman said it was worked by a sister who went to boarding-school, and she pointed out on it the initials of her parents and their twelve children, and told me all their names.

By and by my entertainers made a tour of the premises for my benefit. In the kitchen a fire of peats was burning in a rude little stove. Until comparatively recently they had used the wide fireplace, but it had no grate and smoked horribly, and so they bought the little stove. They wanted the proprietor to attend to the chimney and put in a range, but he would not, nor would he do aught to better their ceiling, which was black with soot and cracking off all over in minute flakes. This landlord, I learned from others, did not

take much interest in Mull farming. He was a millionaire, a keen business man who had made a good deal of money by his own efforts and gathered more to himself by marrying a titled lady twelve years his elder. In spite of his wealth he was a stickler for economy, and would pick up empty match boxes on the London streets, and he exacted his dues to the last halfpenny. Yet if anything took his fancy, he thought nothing of paying a thousand pounds for it. Hugh said the landlord had a fine mansion in London, and that this one in Mull was no more than a hen-house to that.

In the Kilpatrick Farm kitchen, the floor was of flat stones, all marked in a curious scroll-like pattern that covered them with a network of curling lines. This marking was renewed regularly every Friday by the woman, who would get down on her knees and scratch the pattern in with a sharp piece of soapstone. The decorative ornamentation of the floor was of course not very permanent, yet it lasted fairly distinct over Sunday. At one side of the room hung a "wag at the wa'" clock, with its weights and pendulum exposed, and near by stood a dresser full of old-time pewter and crockery. The woman said she would show me a bag of seaweed she had in the pantry — seaweed of a sort they used a great deal in making puddings. But she forgot that in the pantry she had prisoned a hen and



A KITCHEN CORNER

twenty chickens. This family came running out when the door was opened, and the woman drove them on through the kitchen and scullery into the yard. The seaweed proved to be Iceland moss. They pulled it on the shore in summer at low water, brought it to the house in creels, and spread it on the grass for about a month to bleach and dry. They always gathered enough so that they could put away a bushel-bag full of the shrunken product for the year's use.

They had to depend very much on themselves for the food they ate. No grocer's or baker's cart ever visited them, and no "flesher" with "dead meat." To a considerable extent the sea was their larder. The stalwart brothers often went fishing of an evening, and they would easily catch a hundred apiece, and sometimes between them brought home half a thousand. A part of the catch they ate fresh, a part they salted for winter, and a part they fed to the pigs. They did not think much of fish as a food for human beings.

The doors were open from the kitchen through the scullery into the dairy, and I was invited to step into the last named apartment and look about. It had a stone floor, and its one window was much shadowed by ivy, so that it must have been dark and cool in the warmest weather. On the shelves were rows of heavy pans full of milk, a tall earthen crock for cream, and several wooden firkins packed with butter. Lastly,

there was a wooden churn of the slim, upright type, broad at the bottom and small at the top, with a long handle that worked up and down. The dairy was clean and wholesome, and the farm folk said their butter always took first prize at the fairs.

Not only did my hosts show their house, but they took me to the barn and byres. The inspection ended with the barn loft. Here was not much just then save high-piled bags of meat (grain) for the cattle, protected by an occasional clumsy trap set for rats, and the loft's chief claim to interest lay in the fact that years ago the people of the neighborhood frequently used it for a ballroom. On such occasions it was all trimmed with evergreens, and lit with "paraffine" lamps; there was music of harps, pipes, and fiddles, and they had very merry times. But they never had such gatherings now. There was no one to come to them. Formerly nearly twoscore crofters had their homes right on Kilpatrick Farm, and all of them had large families. To-day there was not a single croft family left.

In a corner of the barn loft lay a heavy round stone, something like a cheese, with a hole in the middle. Hugh explained that it was the upper half of an ancient grinding stone, a relic of the days when the old wives ground their own oatmeal by hand. He had seen them do it when he was a lad, and they did it yet in

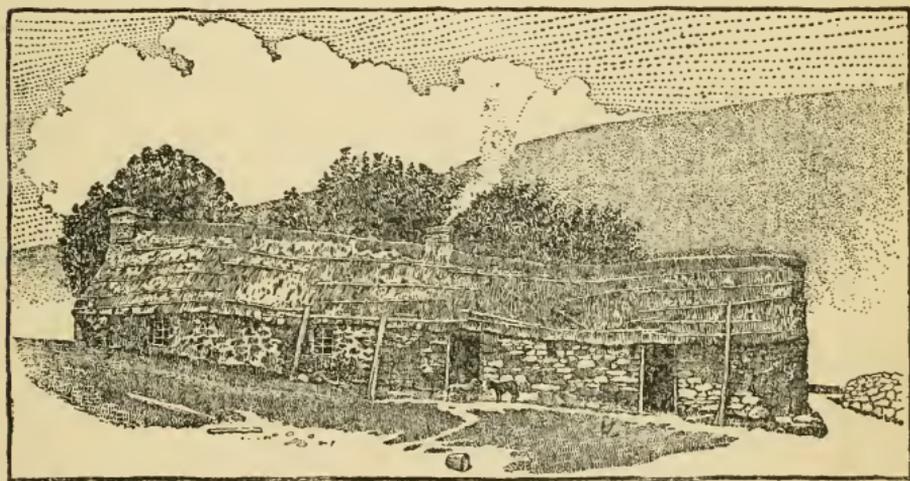
the remote Highlands. If the supply of meal ran low, the woman would bring in a measure of oats, dry them in a pot over the fire, grind them, and make the flour into cakes, all within two or three hours. He had seen butter made in a bottle, too. One day, while in another part of the island, he had stopped at a cottage, and a woman in the kitchen was shaking something white in a black bottle, and she said it was cream. The bottle method of churning is adopted by crofters who do not usually make butter, and who take this way of providing a little for expected company or for a family treat.

My entertainers used excellent English in conversing with me, but ordinarily they talked the Gaelic, which is the common language of the island, and which they considered, as compared with English, decidedly finer and more expressive. When I intimated that I must be getting back to my lodging-place, they insisted I should lunch again, and after that they escorted me out the front door as far as the gate, and the woman picked me a bouquet from her flower garden. At the final handshaking they begged me to write from America to assure them that I reached home safe. From the end of the lane I looked back and saw the three standing beside the garden gate watching me out of sight, and I went on with a heart warmed by their hospitality more than I can tell.

It began to rain again by the time I reached the lodge, and evening came early, with a steady down-pour. I sat in the best room next a diamond-paned bay-window that had a wide sill set full of potted plants. The rain pattered on roof and roadway, and rustled through the leaves of the trees, and I heard the low roar of the sea pounding along the shore. For a time I had the company of my landlady, who talked with hardly an interruption until her work took her to the kitchen. Then her husband came in — a withered ancient who was as reticent as she was garrulous. He soon adjourned to the kitchen, and I saw him no more. The wife, as she stepped around, busied with her evening tasks, groaned at frequent intervals, and she had a most distressing way of saying, “Oh dear! Oh dear!” over and over again. She had lumbago and stomach trouble, she informed me, and things were always very bad with her in stormy weather. She had been saying yesterday that to-day would be rainy, and her husband had thought it would be fair — he could see well enough now that she knew best! Perhaps next time he would take her word when she told him things would be thus and so! But it was just like a man to think he knew all there was to know!

When I looked out next morning the clouds still hung low and threatening, but the rain had ceased, and

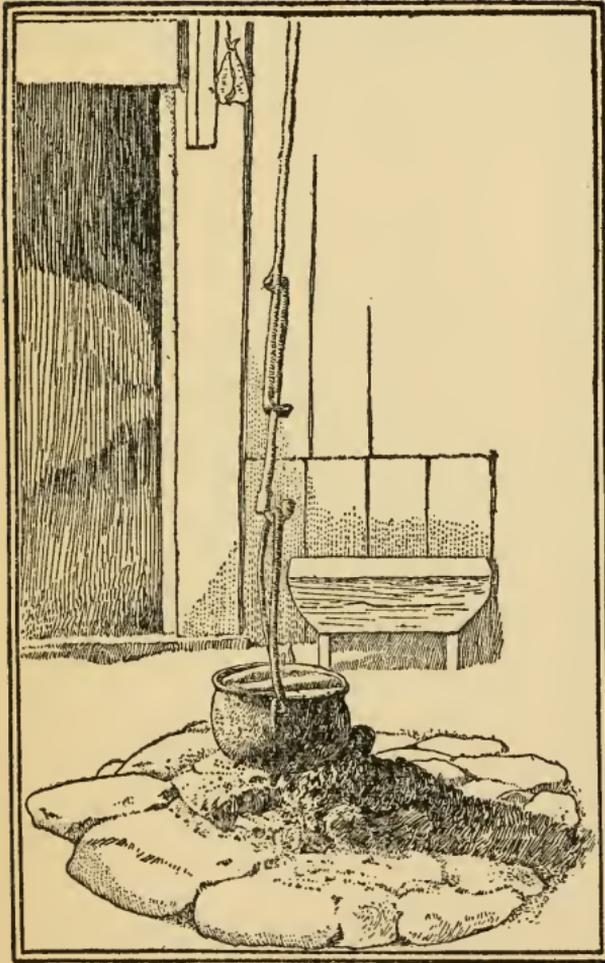
I early prepared to go out to the steamer that would take me away. A brisk wind blew, and the waves were crested with whitecaps, and dashed into high-leaping spray along the rocky shore. The rowboat careened and bounded finely when it got beyond the cover of the pier, but the embarking was safely accomplished, and the spice of adventure which it furnished was not by any means the least agreeable feature of the day spent on this far-away Scotch island.



An Old Farmhouse

X

THE CROFTERS OF SKYE



A Fire on the Floor

I WAS not returning to Oban. On the contrary I had taken a steamer bound northward for the Isle of Skye. The distance was only seventy-five miles in a direct line, yet our irregular cruising made it an all-day's journey. We zigzagged back and forth interminably between the islands and the mainland, and stopped at every tiniest sea-

side village. At the larger places we entered a harbor and tied to a pier, but oftenest we simply slowed up in the offing and were met by a rowboat. Every one on board watched the transfer of passengers from the panting, slow-heaving steamer to the wave-tossed smaller craft with keen interest. No mishaps occurred, yet there was always a decided flavor of excitement and danger.

Many ducks were afloat on the billows in groups here and there, but at our approach would make hasty dives from sight. Multitudes of gulls, too, were bobbing on the waves, and other multitudes were sitting on the low rocks at the water's edge or were idling about in the air. Sometimes a whole flock of them would be startled to wing from the sea or shore, and there would be so many that they formed a white cloud.

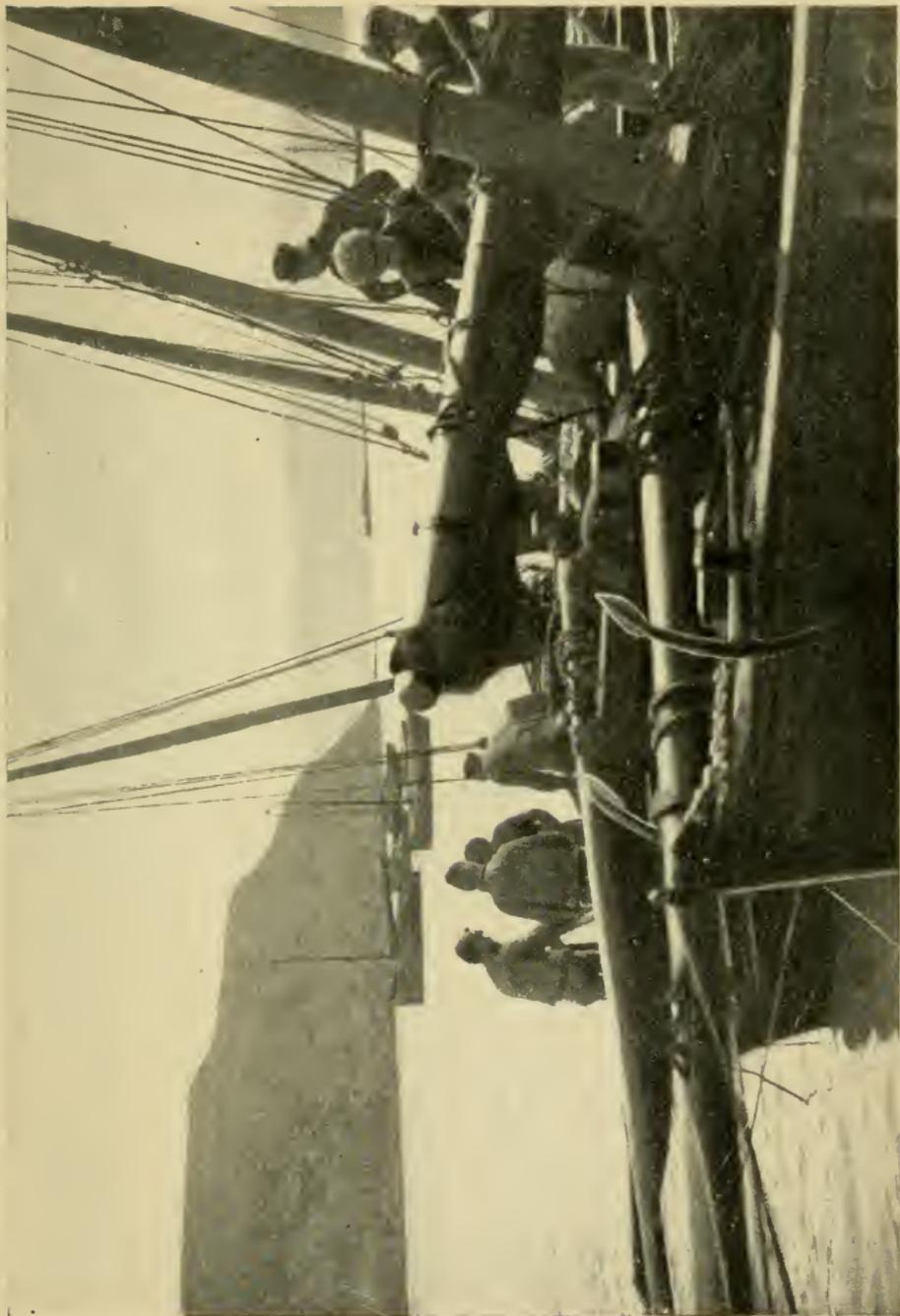
Now and then we passed a lighthouse or met a steamer, or had a sailing vessel or two within our horizon, but the prevailing impression was one of loneliness. The coast was rarely if ever lost to sight. Much of it rose in high, rugged cliffs, gray and worn with the unending struggle with the elements, and everywhere inland were great, dark hills lifting often into dim mountains whose higher peaks were hidden by the clouds. Villages were few and far between, and even neighborless single habitations were infre-

quent. Most of the homes were low, earth-hugging thatched cottages, with walls of dark stone that made the whole structure the same sombre color as the landscape.

Of the islands we passed I think I regarded Eigg with greatest interest, for there, long ago, was enacted one of the grimmest of old-time tragedies. It was an incident in the warring of the local clans. The Macleods of Skye had made a successful descent on the island, and all the inhabitants, numbering two hundred, were driven into a big cave near the shore. Then the savage invaders built fires at the mouth of the cave, and those within were suffocated by the smoke, and not one escaped the cruel death.

I went "steerage." But steerage on a little coasting steamer is very different from what it is on an ocean greyhound. One would have crowded quarters and the company of the scum of the earth on a transatlantic steamer, while here there was abundant room, and the peasantry and tradespeople who were my fellow-voyagers were in no wise untidy or offensive. I was really quite comfortable, in spite of being excluded from the upper deck and from the cabin at the stern.

The person among the passengers with whom I became best acquainted was a heavy, talkative old man. He said he was a native of Skye, and when that island hove into sight he was rapturous.



SKYE FISHING-BOATS

“Skye is not a place of dear prices,” he declared. “It’s not like Oban. Aha! There they skin the nose off you with their prices. But Skye — Skye is a fine place to live — good fishing — it’s healthy — beautiful water for drinking, not the like of it in this wide world; and there’s no such scenery anywhere else in Scotland. You want to see the Coolin Hills. But you’ll have to have stouter shoes than those you’re wearing, if you’re going tramping there, and you’ll want thick stockings like these I’ve got on. Feel of ’em. They’re stiff — not soft like factory goods. They’re homespun, same as my clothes. Those trousers now, the cloth in ’em’s just a blanket, only different color, and it washes. When those trousers get dirty all you have to do is to put ’em in a tub with water and soap and tramp ’em out the way they do blankets.

“Do you see the tips of some hills ’way off ahead? Some of the mountains back in there are black — black as the old Nick! There’s a church over on the other shore of that bay we’re passing. I know the minister. He got married lately, and I saw his wife when I was there last month. Aha! They’re a pair of old fools. What’s the good of people’s marrying after they get to be sixty! A man’s only getting a nurse to take care of him. You get cross by the time you’re sixty, and ill-tempered, and the dickens is to pay!”

In the late afternoon we drew near our destination, and the steamer swung around an outjutting of high cliffs into the quiet of Portree harbor, where many little fishing-boats lay softly rising and dipping at their anchorage. For a short time our arrival made great hurly-burly on the pier, and then things quickly subsided to their usual tranquillity. Near by, a squad of stout, kerchiefed women were busy packing herring in barrels, and a few leathery-visaged fishermen were hulking about. Several small boys were dangling lines from the wharf or from the boats moored along it, and were catching fish from the clear, green seawater as fast as they could pull them in. I would have liked to linger had the neighborhood been less odorous. As it was, I soon went up to the town and sought out a lodging-place.

Portree is the commercial centre of the island, and though its people number only about a thousand, it boasts of five hotels, as many churches, and three banks. A large, modern-looking school-building stands on the outskirts, and a courthouse and jail front on the open square in the town centre. The jail was empty at the time of my visit, as indeed it is usually, for the islanders are uncommonly peaceable and law-abiding.

The town is built in a thin crescent on the steep hillside that encloses the harbor. The houses of the

better class are as a rule comfortable, but rather bare. Two stories is the customary height; yet the dwelling is often confined to the upper floor, and the lower used for a shop. In a few instances there are houses sufficiently aristocratic to have space about them reserved for a yard with lawn and flowers, and a little out from the village are one or two gentlemen's places that boast a bit of park. On the other hand, many low whitewashed cottages are included within the village precincts, and a few old thatched hovels.

In one aspect the place is peculiarly rural. Many of the householders keep cows, and at nightfall the creatures are driven in from the outlying pastures straight through the town streets to the byres behind the dwellings. It seemed odd to see cows so much at home in a place that had three banks and five churches. Aside from tradespeople, the inhabitants were mainly fishermen, and the brown-sailed herring-boats put out from the harbor at noon, or eight o'clock every evening, to drag their nets all night. I would see them as they came sailing back in the early morning, and if I visited the wharf a little later, would find the crews busy shaking the shining treasure from the nets into the bottom of the boats, whence they afterward shovelled the fish into baskets and set them ashore.

Coal brought from the mainland is burned in most

of the homes, but the poorer folk use peat cut in the island bogs. There is a daily mail, and with the arrival of this in the evening the people get the newspapers published that morning in Edinburgh. Portree does not lack in culture, as is witnessed by a village improvement society, a literary club whose members prepare and read original essays, and a library club supported by a yearly membership fee of half a crown. The number of volumes owned by the library club is gradually but steadily increasing. At present it is about three hundred. Private libraries are owned in several homes, and an occasional piano is possessed among the well-to-do.

Two roads lead away from Portree to other parts of the island, one across it westerly to a village named Uig, another to the town of Bradford on the south-east coast. From these main highways numerous bridle-paths branch off to the scattered island hamlets. A few trees grew about Portree, and patches of dwarfed and twisted birches make a doubtful struggle for existence in some of the moorland hollows; but otherwise the country is one of great, bare, wind-swept hills, overspread with a mingling of grass, bracken, heather, and wild flowers. Pools with the peat stain in them mottle the boglands, rude outcroppings of rock break through the soil of the slopes, and the mountains are stony crags that look as if the storms had washed

away every vestige of green life and every grain of soil. The streams course noisily down from the heights with many a foaming waterfall, and in the lower valleys they run through wide wastes of boulders and pebbles, the wreckage of frequent fierce floods. A day seldom passes with no rainfall, for the climate is exceedingly moist. Yet the Isle is nevertheless healthy, and the average longevity is remarkably high. It does not suffer from extreme cold in the winter, as one might imagine it would from its northerly situation. Little snow falls, and the season is chiefly characterized by incessant fogs and showers.

The inhabitants number less than seventeen thousand, and there are fewer of them every year. This decline has gone steadily on since 1840, when there were nearly half as many again as there are now. It is a land of crofters, and the crofters everywhere in Scotland have suffered in the last fifty years. They make up the large majority of the Skye inhabitants, yet they control only a small part of the land. Three-fourths of the island is occupied by twenty-nine large grazing farms. On the hills are pastured the farm sheep, and in the glens are pastured the cattle. It needs few people to care for them, and the shepherds, ploughmen, and servants on each farm will aggregate perhaps eight families. The friends of the crofters believe these large farms should be cut up, and they affirm that the land

could support comfortably in small holdings five- or ten times as many families as it does now. A hundred years ago the people had more stock on the moors, they owned a much greater number of horses, they lived in better and larger houses, and there were some hoards of money. When sheep-farming came into vogue, the crofters had to move and huddle in little moorland villages, their savings were wiped out, and the hovels they were able to build for homes were very poor affairs. Many of them are not self-supporting as things are at present. Rents to a very large extent are paid by sons and daughters who have gone to the mainland to work. There are Skye lads and lassies in all the large Scotch cities, and a Portree tradesman visiting Oban or Glasgow is sure to meet some of them, and is equally sure to be made the bearer of money and other presents to the old folks on the home crofts.

Agitation in behalf of the crofters has been going on for many years, and in 1895 they were given the right to have their rents fixed by a commission once in seven years. The immediate effect of this in Skye was to reduce the croft rents forty per cent. The great trouble now is the lack of liberty to acquire large holdings. Another trouble is with the proprietors. About twelve men own the whole island, and nearly all of the twelve live elsewhere. Only a very small proportion



FEEDING THE DOG

of the rentals is spent in Skye itself, which is thus simply drained of whatever wealth it produces. The gentry themselves are poverty-stricken through their own extravagance, as are the Highland chiefs in general. They are educated in the south, and prefer to live there where they "stick out their chests" and try to emulate the style of the English aristocracy, a thing which with their comparatively small income keeps them chronically bankrupt. Perhaps the worst phase of the matter is the slight thought and attention they give to their tenantry, who suffer from the want of sympathetic and intelligent oversight.

The crofters pay yearly rentals of from one to fifteen pounds. This is simply ground-rent, for they themselves erect and own the houses in which they live. On the smaller crofts there is only an acre or so under cultivation, and this is dug over by hand. A crofter, however, who pays a rental above five pounds is pretty sure to have horses and a plough. Some of them have as much as ten acres under cultivation. But few comprehend the philosophy of crop rotation, and through this ignorance the fertility of the land is destroyed.

The average crofter keeps a cow and a calf, a small flock of hens, and a number of sheep. He raises a patch of oats, grows a little field of hay and a few square rods of potatoes; and he has the privilege of

cutting peat on the bog. Oat cakes, fish, potatoes, and milk are the standard foods, with tea, tobacco, and snuff among the necessary luxuries. Ordinarily the cows are kept in the houses, but a man who has three or four, as do the more prosperous crofters, will have a separate byre for them. The cows are extraordinary looking creatures and seem much more like wild beasts of the forest or desert than domestic animals. They are short and broad, with long, shaggy hair and enormous wide-spreading horns. But their looks belie them, for they are entirely peaceable, and the breed is said to be a very good one.

A great deal of the farm labor falls to the lot of the women. I saw them helping in the peat bogs and the hay-fields, and constantly met them on the roads carrying heavy burdens on their backs. The crofts were most of them far from the highways and distant from market. Horses and carts were rare, and the women took the place of beasts of burden to a considerable extent. At the time of year that I was in Skye they were most apt to be loaded with peat, which they carried in creels strapped to their shoulders. The creels were deep, heavy baskets of willow withes woven by the peasants themselves, and they had a capacity of between one and two bushels. Sometimes it was no less than three miles from the peat moss to the croft village. In such a case a woman would stop at inter-

vals to sit and rest, and she would relieve her shoulders of the loaded creel by letting it slip back on a convenient bank or dyke. Many of the women had their knitting along, and when they stopped to rest would set their needles flying.

The garments of the croft women were as a rule coarse and ragged, and a colored kerchief did instead of a hat, or else they went about with their frouzy hair flying unprotected. Occasionally they were bare-foot; but they seldom go without shoes except around home. Some, however, when they have to walk a long distance carry their shoes in their hands for the sake of economy, to save them from wear, and put them on just before they reach the journey's end. Homespun enters largely into the wearing apparel of the crofters, especially of the men. The wool is carded and spun in every cottage, and at least one house in each village is very certain to have a loom in the kitchen on which is woven the cloth for the neighborhood.

The life of the crofters is, as a whole, sober-hued and laborious; and although there are times of recreation, care-free enjoyment and self-forgetting gayety are seldom attained. Of the peasant pleasures, I think weddings, funerals, and the semi-annual communions are chief. These mean much more than in most places, because of the island's isolation. Some of the country weddings are very picturesque affairs. At the home of

both bride and groom a company is made up, and the two bands start to meet at a stated time, each with a piper leading off. After they have joined forces they proceed to the manse, where the wedding takes place. Then they return to the village whence they came, the two pipers piping on ahead, the newly married couple following, and a straggling company of relatives and friends bringing up the rear. As the bride and groom are about to enter the door of the house which is to be their home, some one standing in readiness breaks an oat cake, baked brittle for the purpose, over their heads. This is an old charm, supposed to bring the couples an after life of prosperity and plenty. The young people in the wedding party all scramble for pieces of the broken bannock, and they sleep that night with them under their pillows, for in their dreams they can discern future husbands and wives aided by the presence of these bits of bannock just as surely as we in America can with similarly disposed pieces of wedding cake.

The evening of the wedding day is devoted to conviviality, and there are abundant refreshments in the shape of sweeties, cakes, and whiskey; and songs are sung, and the bagpipes drone ever and anon to lead the dance. The humbler wedding parties occasionally lack the bagpipes, in which emergency, if no other musical instrument is to be had, some one breathes the melodies for the dancers through a paper-covered comb.

Things are still going full blast at midnight, and not infrequently the gray light of dawn is stealing out of the east before the jollification ends.

Weddings are too few and far between to furnish any very material brightness — and the crofters are not a merry people. Still, in their way they find an element of holiday recreation in the most solemn occasion, if it brings a company of them together. For this reason even a funeral is not without its modicum of welcome. It makes a break in the monotony, and it never fails to be largely attended. The people, as they arrive, are provided with a sup of whiskey and with oat cakes and cheese or other light refreshments. After a short service at the house the men form in procession to go to the grave. The women remain behind. There is no hearse in the island, and the coffin, covered with a black cloth, is carried on the shoulders of six bearers. The distance is often long — sometimes as much as seven or eight miles — and the rule is for the men bearing the bier to give place to others about three times to a mile.

Most notable among the events of the Skye year is the summer communion season. It begins on a Thursday and continues through the succeeding Sunday. The meetings are held out of doors, and many of the throngs which attend are present all four days. Curiously enough, the communion season is marked

by a great deal of drunkenness. The crofters in their retired villages, from which they journey only rarely to the larger places, find the facilities for getting drink very limited. Thus, when at home, they seldom taste liquor; but once in the town, even for a religious purpose, the temptation is too much for them.

With the exception of this backsliding at the time of the communion gatherings in the matter of drink, the people of Skye observe their religious days with great seriousness and decorum. Indeed, their regard for the Sabbath seemed to me decidedly puritanic. All work ceases, every one attends church, and the indulgence in any form of amusement is held to be a sin. Nothing could have been quieter than was Portree in the early hours of the Sunday I was there; but when the little bells of the village churches began to ring at a quarter to eleven, there was a change. For fifteen minutes the bells kept up an incessant ding-dong, and during all this time the town walks were noisy with the clack of heavy shoes moving churchward. I joined the throng presently, and wended my way to the Free Kirk on the Square. It was a big barn of a building, whose lack of decoration without was echoed by the plain severity of the interior. A large and attentive audience filled the pews. What most impressed me about them at first thought was their decidedly peaty odor. Evidently many of the



A RIDER

worshippers came from the smoky cabins of the crofters, though I would not have recognized them as belonging to this class by their dress. They were, in fact, so well clad as to be quite transformed. I learned afterward that the peasants, however poor, consider an outfit of modern and presentable Sabbath garments a necessity, and they will sacrifice a great deal in other directions rather than do without them.

The Free Kirk service was entirely in Gaelic, and I was not much enlightened by what I heard. In front of the pulpit sat the precentor, a tall, gray man, who, when a psalm was to be sung, stood before us and led the singing. He would first read a line in a chanting monotone, and then every one would fall in and sing it. Then he would read another line, that would be sung, and so on to the end of the psalm. The music was very simple, and I thought it rather formless — not much more than a wailing up and down, with little melody that I could discover. However, perhaps I could not judge, for those pauses between lines must have tended to dissipate the melody pretty thoroughly. Excepting the precentor, the audience sat during the singing, but we all rose and remained standing through the prayers.

The service lasted nearly two hours. In the afternoon there was a second service, and in the evening a

third. That of the afternoon was in English, and a very different congregation gathered then, largely made up of tradespeople, but they had the same preacher. A choir sat in front of the pulpit where before had been the lonely precentor. I suggested to one of the townsmen that an organ would be a still farther improvement. But he said that the choir itself was a great innovation, and that the large majority of the worshippers would decidedly object to an organ. I was not surprised, for I had found the piano at my lodging-place shut and locked that morning, and had been informed by the maid that the landlady objected to having it played on Sunday, and I had already drawn the conclusion that the sound of a musical instrument was an abomination in the ears of the people of Skye on the Sabbath.

The Scotch national costume was more in fashion among the men of Portree than in any town I had visited. A number of the young men wore their kilts to church, and the leading merchant of the place was especially conspicuous in the garb of a Highland chieftain. The gay colors, the sporran hanging down in front, the jaunty cap, and the bare knees made him look quite romantic, while a dirk stuck in his right sock gave him a touch of the savage.

One of the villages of the crofters was built along the shore on the borders of Portree. No road led to

it, and footpaths served as its only connection with the highway a quarter of a mile up the hill. The slope between the cottages and the road was cut up into long strips, and here the crofters raised their crops. A few of the houses were whitewashed, had chimneys, and looked fairly comfortable, but most had walls of rough stone chinked with earth, and roofs of thatch protected from the onslaught of the gales by a criss-crossing of cords, or perchance by an old fish-net. Frequently the thatch had patches of grass and weeds growing on it, and I saw one roof so covered with rank herbage that it had the appearance as if the house inmates were raising a crop there. Numerous families of chickens and ducks were picking about the rocks of the beach or scratching out a living in the neighborhood of the cottages. Sometimes the hen-house would be a dark little hovel hugging the side of the cottage, sometimes a boat turned bottom upward. There was much refuse about the house fronts, and the beach was strewn with broken clam shells. A narrow, irregular path, just above high-water mark, linked the houses together. It was very rough and muddy, and it turned aside now and then to approach one of the many springs that furnished water for the hamlet. The springs were just as nature made them, except that they had been rimmed around with a few stones to form shallow basins.

The poorer of the croft homes are about as humble as they well could be. The floors are of hard-packed earth, and the fire is in the middle of the kitchen on a rude platform of stones six or eight inches high. A hole in the thatch overhead is the only apology for a chimney. In replenishing the fire the embers are poked together and fresh peats are set up on end around the hot coals. A rope or long pole fastened up above to the ridgepole reaches down, so that pots can be hung over the fire on hooks at its lower end. The tea-kettle is kept warm by being set on the hot stones a little to one side. Such a kitchen has no ceiling, but is open to the rafters and crooked stringers of the roof, which are as black as midnight with incrustations and hangings of grime and soot. The furniture is meagre, cheap, and shaky. There are a few chairs that have seen better days and one or two low-backed settles that in the idle spells are much of the time "full of mens," to quote the expression of a peasant woman. The only other prominent features are a chest, a spinning-wheel, and a small unsteady dresser with a row or two of dishes displayed on its racks. I have seen more ornamentation and attention to the amenities of life in some of our American barns than in these homes of the crofters. They are simply hovels to exist in.

A number of lines run across the kitchen just high

enough to miss the heads of persons stepping around below. These are used for various domestic purposes, but more particularly to hang dried fish on. Windows in the croft homes are few and small, and it seldom happens that a room has more than one. The door is usually open in mild weather to give the smoke an added means of egress, though this does not clear, but only mitigates, the heaviness of the atmosphere. The vapors of the fire penetrate and saturate everything. They affect distinctly the household eatables, both to taste and smell, and they insinuate themselves in every fabric and article of apparel, so that the crofters always carry about with them that heavy aroma of the peat. Let one of them sit in the kitchen of a town residence long enough to have a friendly cup of tea with the cook, and the peat flavor is apparent all over the house.

You might think the peasants would get so used to the smoke as not to mind it, but this is not the case. The women, especially, acknowledge to feeling a sick turn when on dull days the smoke lies inside, and it is that, not less than the crowded discomfort of the interior, which drives them to do so much of their spinning outside by the house-walls, their knitting on the near banks, and their washing in the streams.

In one of the houses where I stopped an old woman showed me photographs of two intelligent-looking

young men whom she said were her sons, now in Australia. All her five children had left the island save one daughter, a cripple who was then sitting by the fire, taking snuff. The old woman was at work carding wool, and many skeins of yellow yarn were hung on the wall behind her. I was having a very agreeable visit, but after she had exhibited her treasured photographs she put fresh peats on the fire, and the smoke became so stifling I hastened to escape.

This hamlet by the shore was inhabited by folks who depended largely on fishing for their subsistence. Two miles inland was a more strictly farming community which I one day visited. On the way to it I met several men leading panniered ponies. They were going to Portree to get goods brought by the steamer and carry them back into the country. I followed a narrow road that wound along over the moors. This road had been made only about a year. Previously there had been naught but a faintly marked path. The village to which I journeyed was a scattering of low, thatched huts, so earthy and rough they seemed much like boulders of rock sticking up through the soil. They were planted at random on the hillsides and in the hollows, and the distant view of the crofts, with the patchwork of their small fields, was rather attractive.

I went up an almost indistinguishable footway



RESTING ON A DYKE

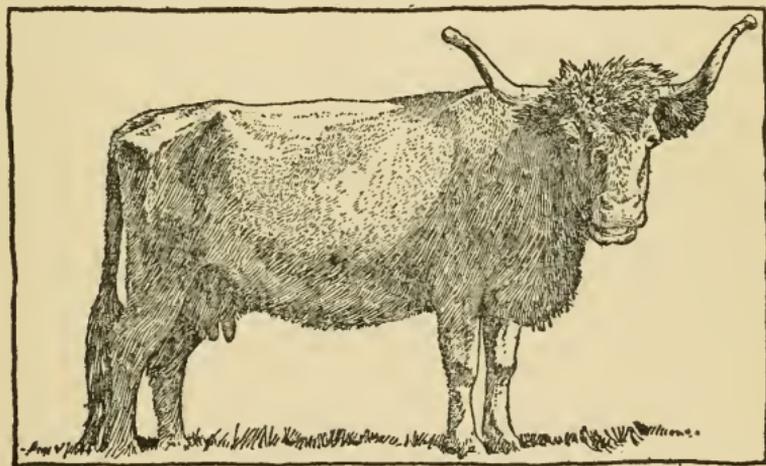
through a spongy bog to a house, where a woman was making a peatstack in the yard. She had been bringing the peats from one of the black cuttings on the moor, and her heavy creel lay near by on the ground. I looked in at the door of the woman's house, and saw a cow and a calf in the dusky interior of an apartment only separated from the family living-room by a wooden partition.

At the next house an old man, smoking a short pipe, and a barefoot woman were sitting talking on a dyke. They had not much command of any language save the Gaelic, but we managed to hold a broken conversation. Presently the woman invited me to have a glass of milk, and led the way to the house. The entrance was at the end, and admitted me first to the byre. The footing was not all it should be here, and the woman sprinkled down some heather to enable me to get safely across the mire to the kitchen beyond. The supply of light for this latter room all came from a tiny, grime-darkened window in the roof and from the distant outer door. It was like being in a cave, and for a time I could hardly see. The woman wiped clean a place on a settle for me to sit, washed a soiled glass, and went into a tiny closet of a bedroom and brought out a bowl of milk. The milk was rich but peaty, and, in the dirt and gloom of the surroundings, not very palatable.

The crofters are sadly handicapped by the poverty and forlornness of their environment, but they have marked natural capability, and many of the young people have in other lands achieved wealth and even greatness. One influence which helped in the past to sharpen the croft wits was what was known as the "caly," a sort of open meeting for argument, songs, and stories. The "caly" was held in the cottage living-rooms, one night at one house and another night at some other house. The men when they came in seated themselves in a circle about the fire. The chairman, who was always the man of the house, started the evening's entertainment by relating a story or experience, or by singing a song. Then each man in turn to the right would follow suit. In winter the merriment frequently continued all night. Patriotism and a martial sentiment were cultivated, and the participants acquired much useful information. But at length the ministers began to oppose the caly on the ground that there was too strong a tendency to tell profane stories, and now the caly is wholly extinct.

Of the future of the crofters I cannot say from what I saw and heard of them that it appears to hold much brightness. Nature itself in that remote and barren northern island is against them; yet the law has done something of late in alleviating their condition, and may do more. Perhaps the most hopeful sign is the

tendency shown to improve their homes. They are abandoning their primeval fireplaces, and building chimneys, and some of the more aspiring have plastered their house-walls and replaced with slate the roofs of mouldering thatch. This has awakened a spirit of emulation, and many others will follow the example set them as soon as they can gather the means.



A Highland Cow

XI

A COUNTRY SCHOOL



A Bird's-nest in the
Hedge

I HAD wandered into a highland glen girdled about with wild heather-clad ridges. In the depths of the valley a little river looped its way along, helping to make fertile the bordering farm lands, and the heart of the glen with its emerald meadows and the silvery glint of the stream was pleasant to look on; but the region, as a whole, was too treeless to attract, while the brown, undulating hills were so sombre as to be almost forbidding. It is true the district was not without a certain rude kind of beauty, and the hills had about them a good deal

of elemental grandeur, yet to live the year through in their big, barren presence I fancied must be sobering and oppressive.

Probably those born among them did not share this feeling, for the glen did not lack inhabitants. There were farmhouses and now and then the humble dwelling of a cotter or a laborer. One would expect in a region so lonely that the homes would gather in clusters for companionship; but it was not so here, and neighbors were half a mile or more apart. Even the schoolhouse, midway on the long valley highway, stood solitary like the rest, and was almost as much isolated from neighbors as it was from the great world that lay beyond the encompassing hills.

I entered the glen wholly intent on pushing up the valley and enjoying the unfolding of the landscape which took on a new aspect with every turn of the road. But when I reached the schoolhouse I paused. What kind of a school would be kept here, I asked; what sort of a person would the teacher be, and what the nature of the scholars? I turned into the school-yard.

It was a long, narrow yard surrounded by a high stone wall. There was some greenness near the road, but the grass had been much trampled, and the playground grew dustier and more gritty as I walked down it, till near the school building naught was left but bare earth. At that end of the yard stood a pump, around which the ground was hardened and worn more than anywhere else. This seemed to attest the

great fascination water has for children, both for internal thirst and external sport. One would think there were lingering impulses in them descended from some far-back fishy ancestors.

The schoolhouse had masonry walls spatterdashed with a mixture of whitewash and gravel, and it had diamond-paned windows that gave it something the look of a tiny church. But this churchly illusion was lost in the near view, for then I saw that the master's dwelling was joined to it at the back, and that a gate in a rear corner of the playground opened on a path leading to his house door.

It was as yet too early in the morning for school to begin, and at first I thought the place was deserted; but when I looked inside, I discerned with some difficulty a little girl at the far end of the schoolroom half concealed in the dust raised by a vigorous plying of the broom. She had paused when she saw a stranger in the doorway. I spoke with her, and learned that she was the master's daughter, and then I asked to see her father. She said he was down in the meadow by the river, and without more ado dropped her broom and trotted away, yelling, to find him. I am afraid this little earthquake of a daughter chasing and calling for him so vociferously scared the man, for it was barely a minute before he came running breathless up the hill back of the schoolhouse and jumped through

a gap in the wall as excitedly as if he had been going to a fire. I thought he might be disappointed when he found only me there, but his haste apparently only meant cordiality. Probably a visitor was a rarity to be made the most of.

The master was a little man, rather above forty years of age, with a quick and nervous manner that was the more pronounced because of his anxiety to do the honors of host with credit: and no one could have been kinder or have done more to make my stay pleasant. By the time I had done introducing myself the scholars began to arrive, and presently the master put aside his broad-brimmed gray hat and called his pupils who were at their games in the dusty yard by shouting from the doorway, "Come away, then!" a command which he supplemented with a shrill whistle.

The schoolroom seemed very small and crowded when all the scholars were in. It was lighted by four large windows. A continuous desk ran the whole length of the west wall, and turning the corner extended as far as the master's platform. This desk was right against the sides of the room like a long shelf, and the children who sat on the backless bench that paralleled it faced away from the rest of the school toward the wall. To get to their seats on this bench the children usually either stepped over or sat down and whirled. The boys were some of them very

acrobatic in getting their heels over the obstructing bench. On the other hand, some of the girls went to the opposite extreme and waddled mildly over on their knees.

Most of the schoolroom floor space was filled with a row of long movable desks, each with an accompanying bench. The scholars on the rear seat had nothing but vacancy to lean against, but the others had a sharp-cornered desk at their backs. At the far end of the room sat the babies of the school — half a dozen little innocents on a bench snug against the wall with a row of hooks above hung full of hats and cloaks. What weary times those little martyrs must have, I thought, sitting there with heels dangling in air through the long school hours. I could see but one alleviation — the bench was against the wall, and if its occupants went to sleep and tumbled off, they could not fall backwards.

None of the school furniture had ever been painted, and the white plaster of the walls had never been papered. The only wall decorations were two large squares of blackboard suspended from nails, several good-sized maps, and a tonic-sol-fa chart. The room was heated by a small fireplace in which peat was burned. If they ever had a touch of New England weather in their winters, the children were bound to suffer. But the master considered the schoolhouse

on the whole a very good one—certainly it was an improvement on the one in which he got his own early schooling. That had a floor of dirt, and he described the fascinated interest with which he used to watch the angleworms boring up out of the earth in school-time.

I had been somewhat disturbed when I went inside the schoolhouse with the master, following the children whom he had summoned from their games in the yard, to find that the schoolroom was entirely chairless. There was not even a chair for the teacher, and I was preparing to sit on one of the benches with the scholars when he stopped me, and sent a boy to the house for a chair. I was curious to learn what he himself did for a seat. So far as I observed, he made his desk on the platform serve. It was a boxy little affair, with a tall bottle of ink and a pile of copy-books on the floor underneath. The master had several different ways of sitting down on this desk, and sometimes he half lay down on it. He was entirely unconventional.

The first thing the teacher did, after I had my chair and the scholars were in their places, was to say in his sudden, explosive way, "Stand, then!" The children stood and repeated the Lord's prayer in unison, and at the close the master said, "Sit, then." Usually the session began with the singing of a hymn, but the

dominie explained that as several of his best singers were absent, he did not feel like having the singing before a stranger.

At the conclusion of the prayer he asked several scholars to repeat certain of the commandments, and tell what was meant by them, and the whole hour from nine to ten was spent in these and other exercises of a distinctly religious character. The master said it was the hour of "the conscience clause." Attendance was not compulsory, and any parents who chose could keep their children out till it was over. As a matter of fact, this was a privilege rarely taken advantage of. On the first four days of the week much of the hour was spent in Bible reading, but on Friday the time was devoted to studying the Shorter Westminster Catechism.

At ten o'clock the master called off the thirty-six names he had on his roll, and then he had his oldest class read Sir Walter Scott's poem, "The Battle of Flodden." This class of seniors, which the master spoke of as "The Sixth Standard" had sat, while reciting, in the corner next the platform, with their backs against the continuous wall-desk. The reading was noteworthy chiefly for its remarkable lack of expression. Every child kept the same key of voice right through, and only used punctuation marks to catch breath. One would think the poem itself con-



THE SCHOOL AT WORK

veyed no meaning to their minds, and that they were simply reciting a list of words. After the reading the master put some questions to the class, beginning with, "Where is Flodden?" If the ones questioned hesitated, he hastened their wits by exclaiming, "Come on, now!"

Besides geographical and historical questions he asked meanings of words, had the scholars parse and spell, and sometimes called for the Latin derivation of a word. When he had doubts as to whether the children were going to answer, he would give a partial reply himself, as, for instance, when he asked, "What is the meaning of volley?" — pause — "What is it, Jessie?" — anxious silence which the master breaks by saying, "a great many guns" — he lingered over every word in the hope that the girl would catch the cue — "going off at the same t—"

"Time," says Jessie, quickly, and that passed for an answer. The scholars picked the final word of an answer off the master's tongue in that way again and again, and he would dwell on the first letter of the key-word just as long as he could if the response was still delayed, and lean forward in keen anxiety that the scholar should not force him to pronounce it all. Usually his efforts met with a prompt reward, and he could settle back in relief and in pride over his pupils' ability.

The recitation was brought to an end by the following explanation from the schoolmaster: "King James of Scotland," said he, "fought this battle of Flodden just to please the Queen of France, and he lost his life in it — lost his life to please a woman! There's many a man more has lost his life that same way, hey?"

Now the teacher dismissed the senior class and then he called out, "Come up, the Fifth Standard." The Fifths, having seated themselves in the vacated corner, read a prose piece about the Chinese city of Peking in the same meaningless monotone that the preceding class had used. One feature of the lesson was a description of "a scribe in the street writing a letter for a love-sick swain," and when he finished writing it, he had read it aloud to the bystanders. "You wouldna care to hae your love-letters read that way!" was the master's comment to his class. The children smiled as if they thought not.

The scholars who were not in the class reciting talked together, walked around the room on errands of business or pleasure, and were sometimes mischievous and heedlessly noisy. So great was the pandemonium that the master had me move my chair closer to the reciting class that I might hear them better through the din. When there came a sound of wheels from the highway every one looked out, and word was passed around as to who it was that had driven by.

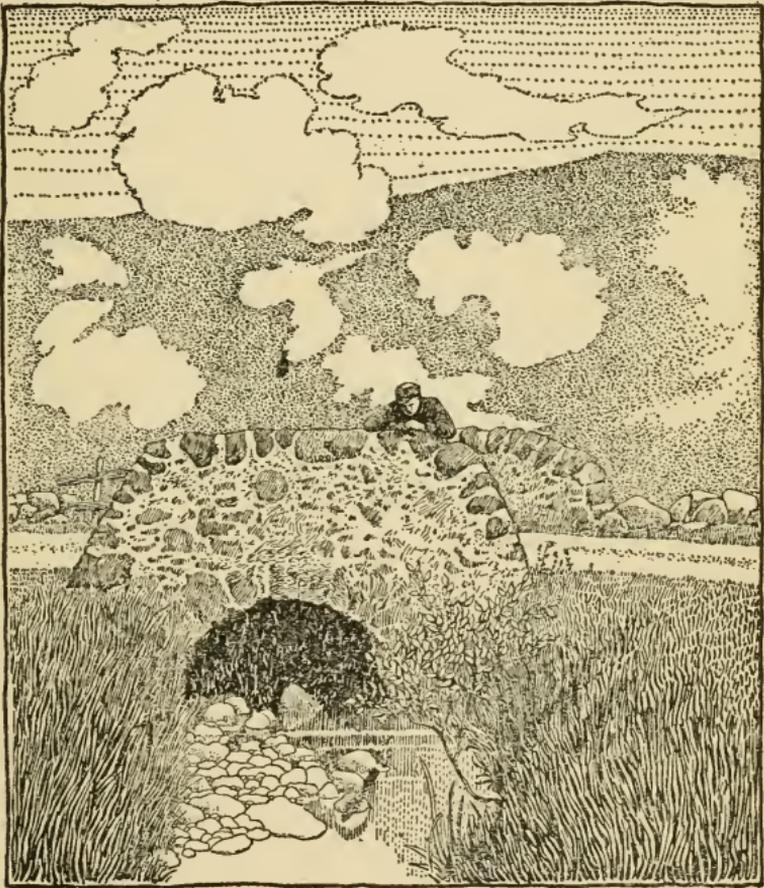
In the midst of the session the sanitary inspector called. He is a government official who comes around once or twice a year, calling at every house to see whether sinks and drains and other details about buildings that affect health are all right. He looks through the rooms upstairs and downstairs, and if people do not keep their dwellings in repair, or crowd too many persons in too few rooms, or if they have stagnant pools close about the house, he tells them to alter things. The benefits of such oversight when the investigation is competent and faithful are obvious, and it would seem as if the same sort of supervision in the interests of health might well be introduced in our own country. The inspector's only comment on the schoolhouse was that it leaked wind badly.

Another interruption was caused by the arrival of a cart from down the valley, that carried cakes and sweets. One of the girls immediately rose and made a tour of the schoolroom, collecting coppers from those who wanted some of the toothsome wares they knew were to be had from the pedler waiting in the roadway. The girl acting as agent for her companions went out, did the trading with the man who drove the cart, and then hastened back to distribute the goods she had bought through the schoolroom. All this made no appreciable interruption in the school routine, and was plainly prearranged and understood by all parties.

The morning session of school was very long. The hour allowed for dinner did not begin till one o'clock, and when the master about twelve let the children out to play, I signified my intention to leave. But he would not hear to it unless I came to the house first and had a bottle of ale with him. I agreed, as far as going to the house was concerned, but the ale he drank himself. In the fear that I had refused because ale was not strong enough, he proposed to set out whiskey for me, and when that, too, failed to prove a basis of good fellowship, he asked his wife to bring a glass of milk and a plate of biscuit and cheese.

We chatted indoors for a time, and then he took me into his garden and talked of its various flowers, shrubs, and vegetables, and the richness of the heather honey that his bees made. When at length I said "good-by," I left him with real regret, his hospitality was so hearty, and he was so anxious all through to make my stay pleasant. He was an easy-going little man, and his teaching was nothing to boast of. Indeed, the school had the air of a rather disorderly family, and the master seemed more like an older child in control than the middle-aged man that he was, making teaching in this lonely Highland valley his life-work. Still, whatever the teacher's faults, his heart was right, and there was something about the school and its ways in their unconventional simplicity that attracted one.

I shall probably never see that out-of-the-way glen again, nor ever hear from it, but I shall never forget the kindly master and his little white schoolhouse, with the big brown hills frowning and glooming down on it with every passing cloud-shadow.



“A Wee Brig ower a Burnie.” ✓

XII

THE SABBATH AND THE KIRKS ✓



A Garden Rose

OF the several leading religious denominations in Scotland, that known as the Free Kirk possessed for me the greatest attraction. I must, however, confess I am only familiar with religious Scotland as a stronghold of Presbyterianism. There were three branches of this faith—the Established Kirk, the ‘U.P.’s’ or United Presbyterians, and the Free Kirk. But the last seemed to have the most honest independence, vitality, and enterprise, and to draw to its

pulpit, as a rule, the strongest and most original men.

As typical a Free Kirk as any which I attended was one in a certain glen of the southern Highlands. The

building was of stone, very plain, and of modest size. In these things it was like most country churches; but the interior was not so characteristic, for it had been recently modernized, and had an inclined floor and steam heat. Still, the pews were uncushioned, and there was no organ. Indeed, organs are almost never found in rustic houses of worship, and are rarities even in the large towns. Service was supposed to begin at half-past eleven, but it was customary to allow some leisurely minutes of grace for the benefit of the belated. Shortly before the appointed hour, the little bell in the kirk cupola commenced a hurried tinkling, and the village ways, which hitherto had been very quiet and deserted, were enlivened by groups of soberly dressed worshippers faring on foot toward the church. On arriving at the edifice it was to be noticed that the men were in no haste to go inside, but lingered at the kirk gate or around the porch and visited. When the time for service came, and the bell ceased ringing, the outside loiterers would come stamping in. It was no wonder that their tread was emphatic, for their shoes were exceedingly sturdy, and the soles were well studded with heavy-headed nails. A pair of men's "strong-wearing boots" would weigh six pounds, and the projecting iron pegs number two hundred or more in each.

The minister did not appear until the congregation,

including late comers, were all in the pews. Then the door at the rear of the kirk opened, and he came rustling down the aisle in his robes. In front of the pulpit was an open space with a railing around it. There sat the members of the choir. Their leader, or "precentor," gave them the key-note when they were about to sing, and he beat time. Nearly every one in the congregation joined in the hymns, and the music was harmonious and pleasing, and the lack of an organ did not seem serious. The worshippers all had Bibles, and looked up the minister's texts and followed him in his Scripture readings with great faithfulness. There were two sermons, a short, simple one for the children, and a long one, various-headed and more or less theological, for the older hearers. Both discourses were vigorous and thoughtful, and showed the preacher to be a man of sense and ability. He was listened to attentively for the most part, about the only distractions being the occasional passing of snuff-boxes and the sounding blasts of noses that succeeded this ceremony. Not far from the pew I occupied on my first Sunday sat a venerable farmer, who, from time to time, took his snuff-box from his vest pocket and passed it to the elder in the seat behind, with the stealthy quiet and sidelong glance of a schoolboy doing something he ought not, on the sly. When the box returned to him, he indulged in a generous sniff himself, and then

got out a great colored handkerchief; and it was a full minute before he had adjusted himself into his original watchfulness of the points of the sermon.

I was told that this old farmer sometimes fell asleep and snored in church, and that of late, finding ordinary methods of inducing wakefulness insufficient, he had come to church generously provided with sweeties, on which he ruminated between snuff-takings. - The gossips affirmed that he made such a noise cracking away at the sweeties after he got them between his teeth, that you could have heard him all over a church three times as large as the Free Kirk. This was perhaps an exaggeration, for I noted nothing of the sort, nor any serious propensity on his part to drowsiness. He certainly acquitted himself better than an old lady four seats in front of me. The service was long, and toward its close she nodded into a nap and lost her balance. There was a thump and a scrape, and then she started back erect. No one smiled at the episode, and it was apparently too common an occurrence to attract much attention.

Previous to its remodelling, the Free Kirk had a gallery, but this had been for a long time superfluous, and it was torn out. Even with its reduced seating capacity, the kirk was far from crowded. Vacant pews were sadly numerous, where fifty years ago worshippers were so many that not only the body of the church

was full, but some had to be seated in the aisles. In those days the glen was much more densely populated, and there were many little farms and cotter's houses scattered along the now lonely hillsides. The big farms have absorbed them, and the walls of the little houses have gone into stone fences or new byres on the large holdings that are at present customary. The cities and the new countries beyond the seas have drawn many people from the glen. In 1845 thirty families left at one time for America. But in spite of the diminished size of the congregation, the parishioners pay their preacher £180 a year, and give him the use of the manse in which he makes his home.

This manse, in common with most of its kind, was a plain, two-story stone dwelling with a garden at one side that overflowed every summer with vegetables, small fruits, and flowers. Gravelled paths led to the doors, and there was a bit of lawn and some shade trees at the front, and the whole was enclosed by hedges.

It was the habit of the Free Kirk minister to walk or drive on Sunday evenings to one of the outlying districts of the glen, and there conduct a meeting in some cottage or schoolhouse. On mild summer Sabbaths these little gatherings were often held in the open air. I attended one such. It was in a little field back of a row of cottages. Chairs were brought from the houses, and boards from a neighboring joiner's

shop were laid from seat to seat, and twenty or thirty of us found places on them, while several boys sat on the grass by the hedge that was close behind. For the convenience of the preacher a white-spreaded stand was provided. We sang a number of times from Gospel Hymns, and the minister prayed, read from Scripture, and preached a short, practical sermon. Two great beeches, their leaves rustling in the light wind, overspread us, and the low sun looked underneath and brightened their gray trunks. Could any church be finer than this sylvan temple of nature?

In what I saw of the U.P. Kirk, it was much like the Free, and there seemed no special reason why the two denominations should not unite, as I believe they have since throughout Scotland. But the Established Kirk, or "Kirk of Scotland," has an individuality of its own. Official recognition is given it by the government, and it is aided by a levy on the proprietors of the land. Yet because this tax is an indirect one, it does not provoke the discontent occasioned by tithes and church rates in England. To be sure, the landowners who pay the tax add it to the rentals, but as it does not appear as a separate item, its weight is not realized.

The church of the Established sect which I recall most vividly was one in a well-settled country district that supported not only this but two or three dissent-

ing churches. There was a time when a good deal of bitterness was felt between the government church and the dissenting branches; but in this particular community the ancient animosities had apparently died out. I sometimes heard the Established Kirk spoken of as "Auld Boblin" (Old Babylon), yet this mention was made jokingly, and there was no sharpness in the epithet.

The church building was a low, gray stone structure standing well back from the highway at the end of a narrow lane—a lane paved with loose pebbles that made you feel as if you were doing penance as you walked over them. Coarse pebbles up to the size of a hen's egg were a favorite material for paths throughout the district. They even took the place of lawns, as, for instance, in front of the neighboring schoolhouse, where quite a space was overspread with them. The paths and approaches to all the local churches were treated in the same rude way, and once or twice a year the bedrels (sextons) were at great pains to scratch the walks over and pick out every bit of grass that had started on them. If there was any doubt before as to the stern material of which the walks were made, no such doubt could be entertained afterward.

Round about the old church was the little parish burying-ground, with its frequent headstones and simple monuments, some of them recent and some so old

that the markings on them were quite worn away. Perhaps the most impressive of them were certain ones marked with grewsome symbols, like skulls and cross-bones, calculated to put the observer in a properly serious frame of mind. Few were reserved for the grave of a single individual. Usually each marked the burial-place of a family, and whenever one of the household died, a fresh name was carved at the bottom of the list already on the stone. But in the case of the humble majority in the parish, the graves had never been marked at all, and the bedrel in his digging often unearthed ancient bones, or struck the end of a coffin.

On the pleasant summer Sunday that I attended the old church I was early, but the gate at the far end of the lane was thrown back, and the bedrel had completed arrangements for the arrival of the worshippers. Just inside the gate on the right-hand side was a little vestry, like a porter's lodge. Across the path, on a rustic bench under a beech tree, sat the gnarled old sexton. He looked as if he was there in solemn guard over the contribution plate which was on a stand immediately in front of him. No collection is taken up during service in the Scotch churches. A plate on a stand does duty instead; but as a rule this is just inside the entrance of the edifice, and not, as here, at the portals of the churchyard. Every one, male and

female, old and young, seems to feel it a privilege or duty to drop a coin on the plate, and there is sure to be a goodly pile, though very likely mostly in coppers.

I deposited my mite as I went through the Auld Kirk gate, and continued along the pebbles to the church. On looking in I decided I would prefer to sit in the loft (gallery), but how to get there was a problem. It was plain that within the church no way existed to gain the desired place unless one was athlete enough to climb the supporting pillars. I did not think that Presbyterianism would countenance such a performance on the part of its gallery worshippers, and I concluded to explore outside. By going around to the rear I found a narrow stone stairway, and I made the ascent to a tiny balcony that clung high on the wall. A door led from the balcony to the interior, and I soon had installed myself in a seat.

Through the middle of the room below ran a single aisle, on each side of which were rows of narrow pews with backs so high and perpendicular it made one ache simply to look at them. Unhappily, the seats in the loft were built on the same plan — a fact I realized more and more emphatically as time went on. Everything was puritanically plain — bare plaster walls, and unpainted pews that were brown and worm-eaten with



AN EXCHANGE OF SNUFF

age. The floor was dirty and littered, and I could not help fancying its acquaintance with the broom dated back many months. This was indeed the case, as I learned later. Twice a year only was the church swept and cleaned, and it was then near the end of one of the undisturbed periods. Heat was supplied by a rude stove that sent a long black pipe elbowing up to the ceiling. The stove was placed just outside the overhang of the loft, and it apparently smoked at times, for the gallery-front and the ceiling above were blackened with soot.

None of the churches of the neighborhood had an organ, partly because it would have been difficult to find any one in the district who could play such an instrument, partly because the more old-fashioned people of the region thought an organ was irreligious, or at least that its music was not of a character suited for Sabbath use in a church. It was a sentiment of much the same sort that formerly condemned stoves, as smacking too much of worldly comfort. When the first church stove was introduced in the region, an elderly worshipper in one of the other churches said disapprovingly, "It is a great peety that their heirts are grown that cauld they maun hae a stove in the kirk."

But a better reason for slowness in adopting artificial means of heating was that the fireplaces in common

use in the homes were entirely inadequate for a large building, and it was a long time before a really practical stove could be had.

The rear gable of the Auld Kirk was surmounted by a diminutive turret in which hung a bell. From it a rope dangled down the ivied wall, and the sexton, in calling the worshippers to service, stood below on the grass. The bell had a tinkling, unmusical sound, with about as much power in it as there is in a large hand-bell wielded at the beginning of school sessions or the close of recess by a New England district schoolmarm. Twelve o'clock was the service hour, and the kirk bell rang for several minutes preceding. Its summons was the signal for the visiting groups of people in the churchyard to come inside, and when the bell presently stopped its clamor, everything became very solemn and quiet. But there was no preacher in the high pulpit, and the treacherous-looking sounding-board hung over vacancy.

The minutes dragged on, and the stiff seats grew steadily harder, and still no sign of a minister. Yet the congregation did not seem at all anxious. The place had very much the air of a prayer-meeting which is open for remarks that no one is ready to offer. The people began to get sleepy, and made occasional shifts to find more restful positions. But at ten minutes past twelve the pastor came—a staid, comfortable-looking old gentleman in full, black robes, who

padding in as complacently as if he was right on the dot. He climbed leisurely to the pulpit, got out his handkerchief and laid it convenient at his right hand, adjusted his books, and then put on his spectacles and gave out a psalm for us to sing.

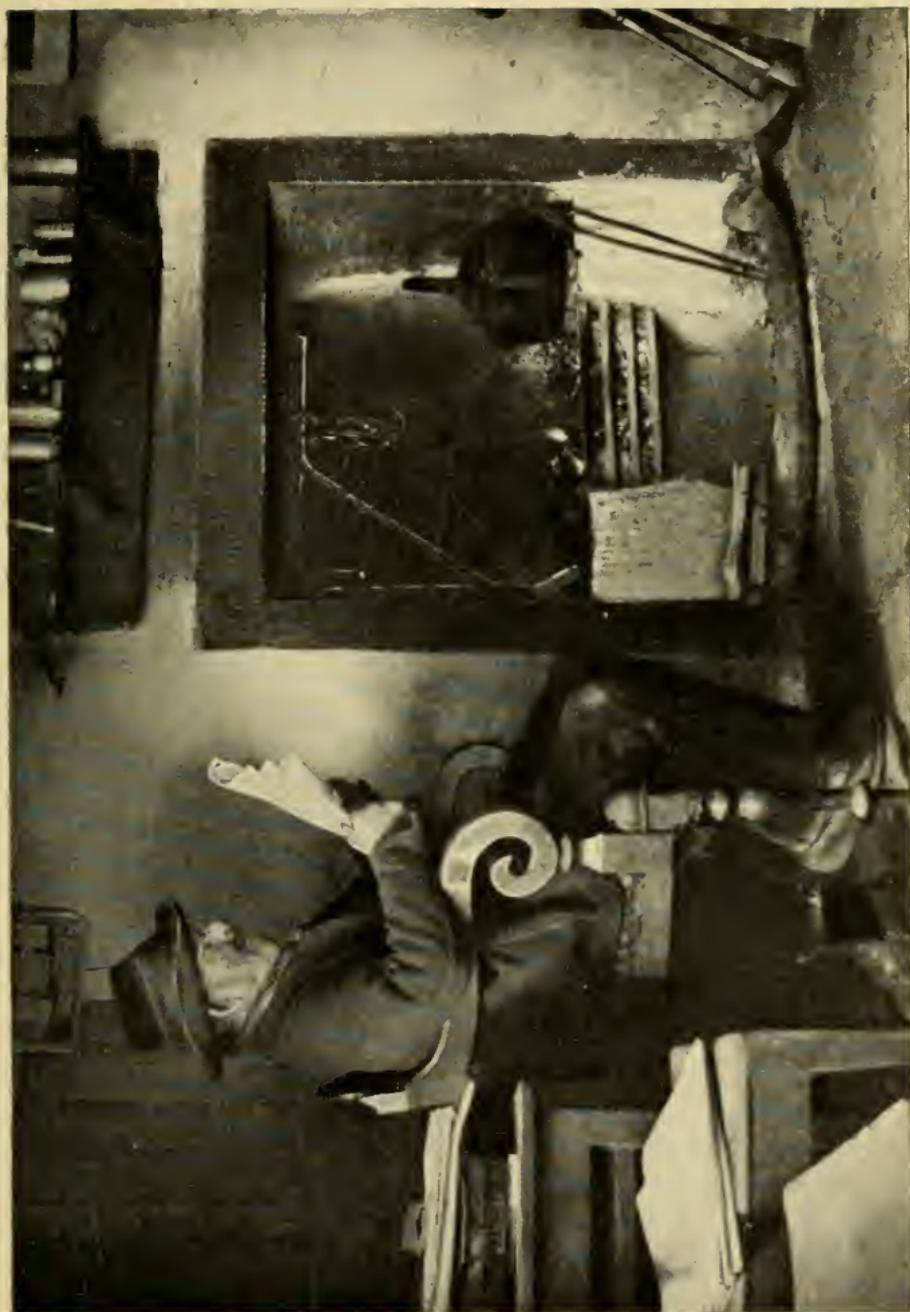
Behind a little desk under the eaves of the pulpit sat a young man who now rose to beat time and lead the singing. He kept up a marked swaying of the body to match the music, and in his efforts to strike the high notes properly, ran his eyebrows up under his hair. The rest of the young men and women who made up the choir sat on the front seats round about, and rose with the precentor. But the main body of the congregation only stood during the prayers. It was a relief to get up; yet the prayers were so long this was a doubtful blessing after all, and most of the worshippers sought some bodily support a good while before the end of the petitions.

The sermon lasted a full half-hour. Its subject was "The Joys of Christ," and the preacher went through a list of firstlies and secondlies up to about tenthlies. He had a slow, droning voice, and the effort to keep awake in those hard, straight-backed seats was painful. When the possibilities of the more ordinary changes of position had been exhausted, the worshippers would lean on the pew-backs in front of them or would bow themselves forward with their elbows on their knees.

Some of the men gripped their heads between their hands in a manner that suggested they were suffering severely, and a few actually slept. There were female nodders, too, and one young woman in the manse pew was several times on the point of falling over altogether. She had continually to open her eyes with a decided effort and look severely at the minister to keep from disgracing herself.

We were a very forlorn congregation, when at twenty-five minutes of two, the minister finished his elucidation of the tenth of Christ's joys, and we were released. The crowd filed out into the sunshine, and straggled along the lane and roadway toward the village. Every one was on foot. Even from a distance of three or four miles the people walked, whole families together. Some of them were old ladies, with their outer skirts caught up over their arms, stepping along as vigorously as if they were in their teens instead of past threescore.

The adherents of "Auld Boblin" were not as devoted to their faith as the worshippers at the other local churches, and though their numbers were decidedly greater, and in spite of their government income, they fell distinctly behind the dissenters in the support they gave their kirk and minister. The minister himself had not the character of the other pastors. His lacks were moral, not intellectual, for he was by

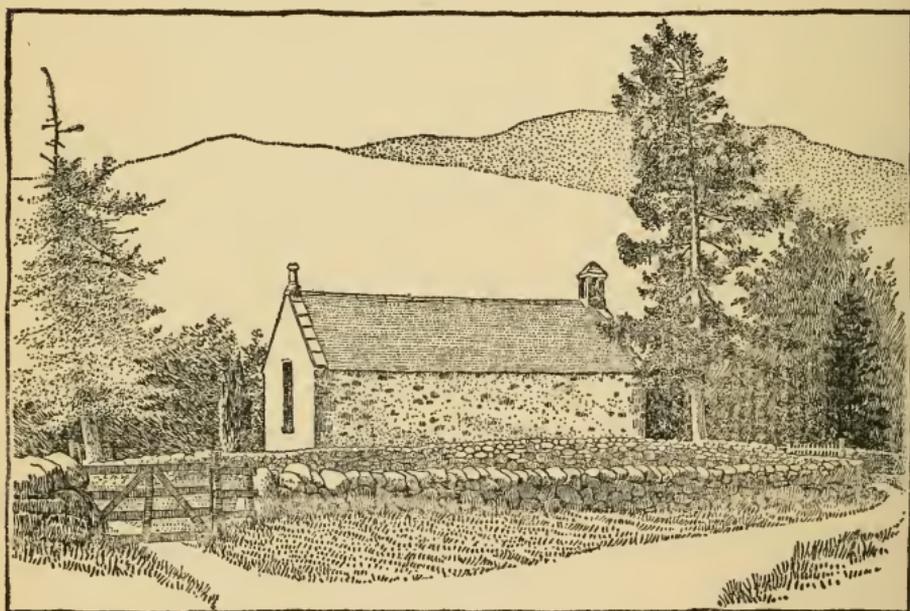


SUNDAY AFTERNOON

no means a dull or ignorant man. Some very ill stories were told of him, and it was well known that both he and his wife drank at times a good deal beyond moderation, even if their red-faced heaviness had not confessed the fact.

But clerical tipping is not regarded as so detrimental to a pastor's influence and efficiency in Scotland as it would be in America. The clergy of the dissenting kirks, however, are now nearly all total abstainers. The opposite is true of their fellows of the Established Kirk, and though the temperance sentiment is undoubtedly growing among them, there are those who are far from being a credit to their calling. I was told by one Scotch minister that not many years ago, in his boyhood home near Oban, they had an elderly clergyman who used to get drunk every time he went making parish calls. At each home whiskey was set forth for him, after the time-honored custom of the region, and this was so much to his liking, and the potations he drank were so liberal, that by the time he had made a half dozen visits it was necessary for some one to carry him back to the manse. The drink habit grew on him, and at length he would appear intoxicated in the pulpit, and be so maudlin the church elders would be obliged to interrupt him and take him out of the kirk by force. In the end the Presbytery induced him to resign. His habits, however, were less

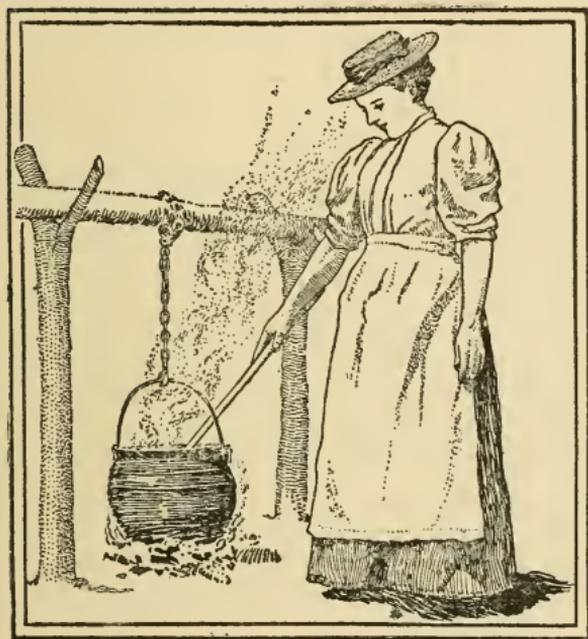
of a scandal than they might have been in that particular community, had not his two predecessors died of delirium tremens. No doubt this is an extreme case, but that such a thing is possible is suggestive of conditions that are a little surprising to say the least.



A Church in a Northern Glen

XIII

A BURNS PILGRIMAGE



A Mess for the Pigs

ROBERT BURNS was born January 25, 1759, in a cabin on the outskirts of the city of Ayr; and for this reason Ayr draws to itself every year hosts of visitors. These visitors, it is said, number fully twice as many as go to Stratford, which seems

to argue that Burns has won more hearts than Shakespeare has won intellects.

You find yourself in a Burns atmosphere the moment you reach the town; for just outside the station stands an imposing monument to the poet, and the

shops are full of Burns photographs and mementos, and nearly all the inns and drinking-places, if not actually named either after him or after the most famous character he created — Tam o' Shanter, — are in some other way reminiscent of him. One dingy little inn, that has a Tam o' Shanter sign hung over its portals, claims to be the veritable place where Tam, on that fateful winter night

“ was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious.”

It even preserves the wooden mug out of which Tam drank, and the oak chair in which he was wont to sit.

Not less interesting are “The Twa Brigs o' Ayr,” to which Burns gave such an entertaining individuality in the poem of that name. When he wrote of them and immortalized their spirited comments on each other's failings, the new brig was just nearing completion. Puffed up with pride it scoffingly asks its rival —

“ Will you, poor, narrow footpath of a street,
Where twa wheelbarrows tremble when they meet,
Your ruined, formless bulk o' stane an' lime,
Compare wi' bonnie brigs o' modern time ? ”

But the auld brig declares —

“ I'll be a brig when ye're a shapeless cairn!
As yet ye little ken about the matter,
But twa-three winters will inform you better.”

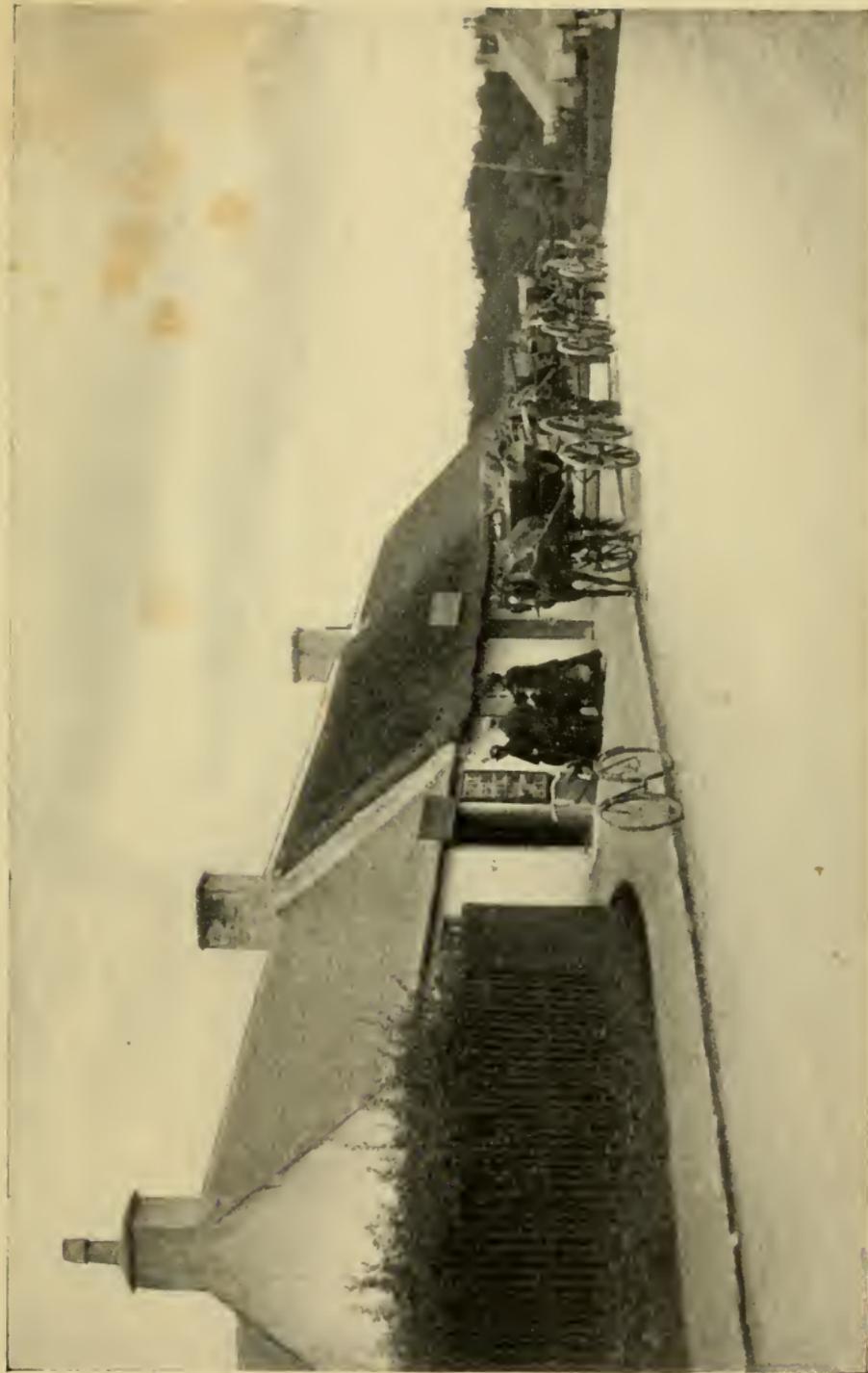
Sure enough, the new bridge weakened, and has been replaced, while the old bridge stands as of yore.

The poet's father, at the time of his famous son's birth, was employed as a gardener by a gentleman of small estate in the neighborhood, and two miles out of the town is the low cottage with whitewashed walls and thatched roof, which was his home. It has a pleasant flavor of unaltered antiquity as seen from without, though this effect is somewhat counteracted by the many buses, coaches, and lesser vehicles that stand along the roadside, or that are constantly coming and going. Until within a few years the house has been an inn; but now it is public property, kept as a memorial, and the entrance is guarded by a turnstile, through which you purchase the privilege to pass by payment of twopence.

The kitchen is the only room of special interest. It was in this room that Burns first saw the light, and tradition adds that the poet was only a few days old when a violent storm "tired" away part of the roof, and mother and babe were forced to seek shelter in the cottage of a neighbor. The apartment is still kept in some semblance of its original state, and contains the old curtained bed in a niche of the wall, a quaint, whitewashed fireplace, a dresser full of blue crockery, a tall clock, and two ancient tables notched all over with knife-cut initials. Yet, after all, the

kitchen lacks the touch of life; it is not used, and it has the stiffness inseparable from a show room.

A short walk beyond the Burns cottage stands the renowned Alloway Kirk, in which Tam o' Shanter saw the witches. It has long been a ruin, and the last of the roof fell in three-quarters of a century ago. Even in Burns's time it had been abandoned, and was going to decay. But the walls continue intact, and are braced by numerous iron rods that will keep what is left of the structure erect for many years to come. A little bell still hangs in the stone arch of the belfry, and a bit of chain attached to it dangles down the front wall. Wandering among the churchyard graves at the time I visited the ancient kirk was a gray, bent old man. He was very thin, and his faded coat hung loosely on his sloping shoulders. Astride his beaked nose he wore a large pair of antiquated spectacles that gave him a look of owlish wisdom. He seemed to make it his business to hobble about and act as a guide to all visitors. Some paid no attention to him, while others found him very entertaining and instructive. He never varied his tones, and he used the same showman's words and manner with every party. At frequent intervals, in the midst of his information, he would break forth into poetry. He pointed out the stone that marked the graves of Burns's father, and "Agnes Brown, his spouse," and led his auditors to



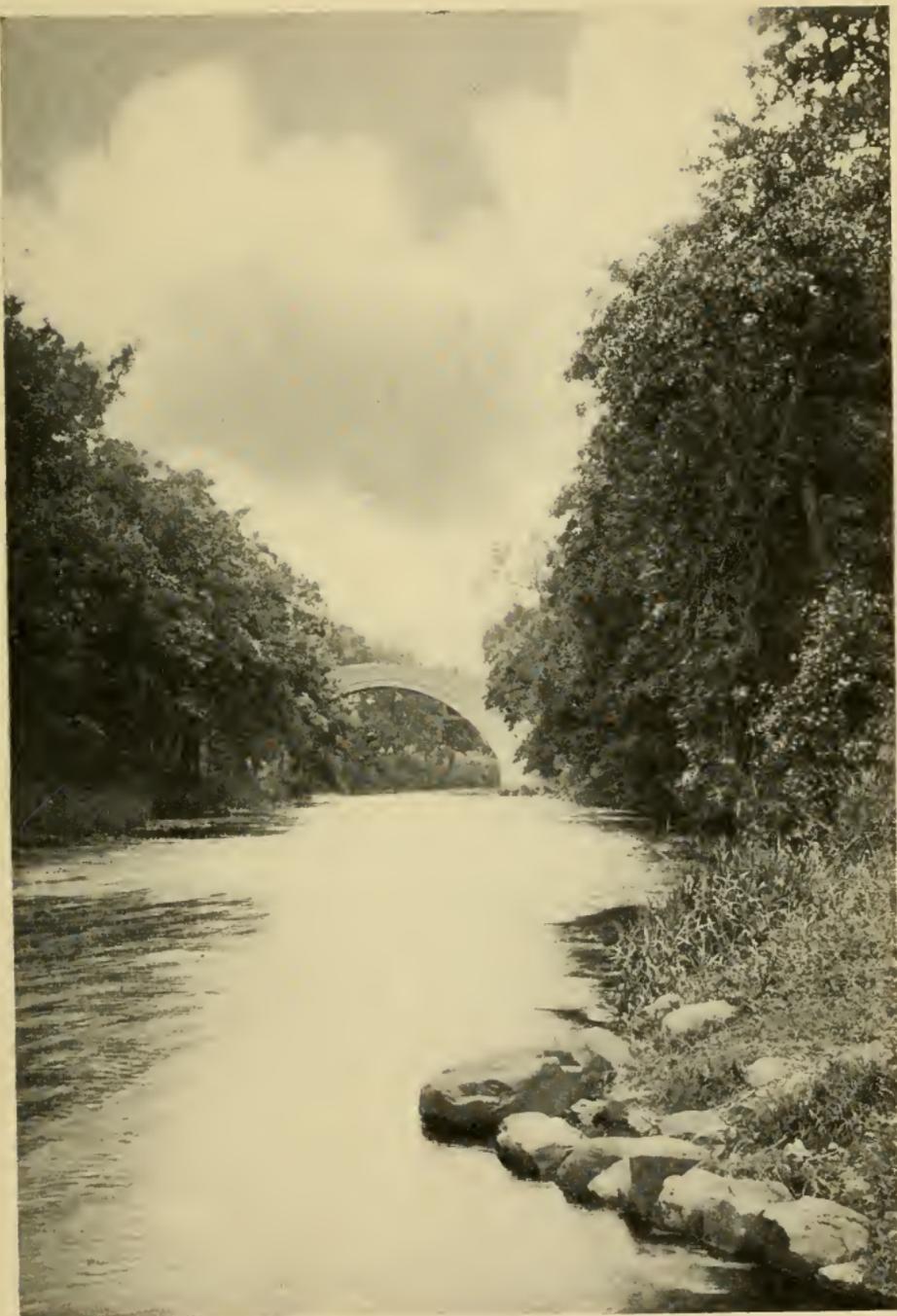
BIRTHPLACE OF ROBERT BURNS

the resting-place of "Souter Johnny." He showed in which direction lay the old road by which Tam came from Ayr, indicated the window of the church whose midnight glow arrested Tam's attention, and through which Tam watched the scene within; and he told which the other window was where the de'il sat fiddling for the witches' dancing. At this point the old man would drop his prose and recite the final verses of the poem with great energy, emphasized by many gestures of hand and cane. His singsong and his Scotch tang gave the poem new flavor and attraction, and I loitered until I had heard the recital several times repeated.

Alloway Kirk is only a short distance from the "banks and braes o' bonnie Doon." The Doon is an unusually pretty little river that flows swift and clear between steep, wooded banks. The auld brig across which Tam o' Shanter made his wild flight is the centre of interest. It has a high, handsome arch, and over this the road climbs as if it had encountered a little hill. The highway of the present time preserves a commonplace level across a new bridge a few rods below, and the auld brig is not much used, save by lovers of Burns and by an elderly man who stations himself at the top of the arch, and, like his fellow laborer in the kirkyard, spouts "Tam o' Shanter" to all comers.

Burns was still a child when his residence in this immediate vicinity terminated; for he was only seven when his father took a small farm on his employer's estate. The change proved to be an unfortunate one, his savings melted away, and presently the family moved ten miles farther into the country and settled on a second farm at Tarbolton. Here the father died, and as Burns was the eldest of the seven children, the responsibility of managing the farm fell on his shoulders. He did not make it pay, and his troubles multiplied.

Meanwhile he had produced a considerable amount of verse, and at length he tried the experiment of putting it into book form. The edition was printed at his own expense, and consisted of only six hundred copies. Yet these were quickly sold, and left him twenty pounds profit. What was of more importance, it won him friends in the literary world, who encouraged him to seek a publisher in Edinburgh. This he did successfully, and the demand for his poems in the following year made him master of about five hundred pounds. Now he felt himself to be independent, and he loaned a part of his wealth to his brother Gilbert, and with the rest took a farm near Dumfries, resolved to settle himself permanently in the occupation of agriculture. On this farm, with his wife and children, he spent what were perhaps the



THE BRIG O' DOON

happiest and most tranquil days of his life. Unfortunately these were not destined to last. In the course of a few years he had exhausted his resources. The soil yielded poetry, but not, in his case, a living, and thenceforth he made his home in Dumfries. There he found employment in the service of the government as an exciseman at a salary of seventy pounds a year, and this meagre income necessitated the utmost economy.

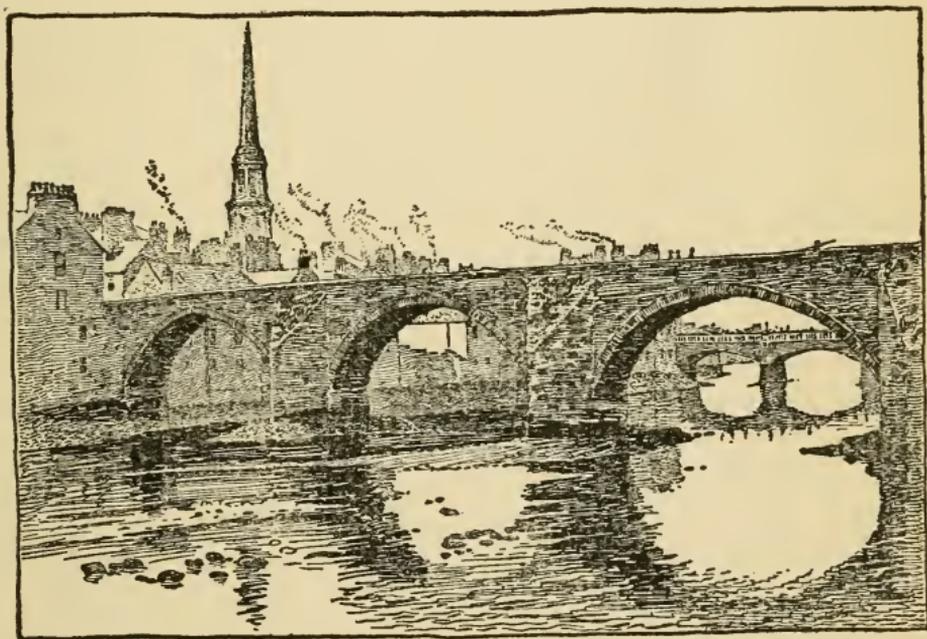
As compared with Ayr, which is unusually clean and tidy for a Scotch town, Dumfries is dirty and crowded. One feels that it is not nearly so much in harmony with the poet as the quiet pastoral region about his birthplace, with its fine trees and level fields. The house in which Burns lived when he moved from the farm is a plain three-story tenement near the river, with other houses elbowing it on either side. A single upper floor, consisting of a little kitchen and two other rooms, was all he occupied. At the end of eighteen months he took another house, and as he had the whole of it, was perhaps more comfortable than in the tenement by the river. Yet it was very small, and whoever seeks it now finds it in a shabby neighborhood, overlooked by big, odorous tanneries. In this house Burns dwelt his last three years, and it was here he died. His poverty at the time was extreme, but he was not in debt.

Just around the corner, only a few steps from the little white cottage among the tanneries, is a great brown church. It is very ancient, and the churchyard is crowded full of heavy gravestones, monuments, and tombs — twenty-six thousand of them — and they stand thicker than they would in a marble yard. There was a grim suggestion, in their close-set rows and regular placing, of a veritable city of the dead from whose treeless barren — sunburned, storm-swept, and blasted — all cheer had flown away. At the far end of this forlorn and stony enclosure the poet lies buried, and over his remains has been erected an ugly mausoleum that is quite in keeping with the surroundings, but wholly foreign to the individuality of Burns himself.

The poet's celebrity during his later years made him an object of interest and curiosity to strangers, and many persons passing through Dumfries would call on him. He could not conveniently receive them at his home, and was accustomed instead to go to the town inns, where the interviews often terminated in convivial excesses. To the taverns he also was in the habit of going with companions who lived in the town itself; and wherever he was, the evening was sure to be a merry one, for his good humor and ready wit were unfailing.

A favorite resort was the Globe Hotel, on a tiny lane just off the square. Here you can see the dark

wainscotted taproom where Burns used to sing, tell stories, and drink. His table is still there, and in a corner is the chair to which he was partial, while, if you will step upstairs, you can see his punch bowl, Jean's workbox, and a verse of "Comin' through the Rye," just as it was scratched by the poet himself on a window-pane. It is a privilege to look on these things, for every relic of Burns and every spot associated with him has something of sacredness; and to Ayr and Dumfries come pilgrims from the world over to observe for themselves the scenes familiar to his eyes and celebrated in his verse.



“The Twa Brigs o’ Ayr”

XIV

A GLIMPSE OF GALLOWAY



A Stone-breaker

WHAT I saw of Galloway was mostly confined to its far end, where I spent some days in the little sea-port town of Stranraer and its neighborhood. The attraction that drew me thither was in part a certain charm that literature has given to Galloway, but more a desire to see

that portion of the district known as "The Rhinns." There was a mystic spell in this name which held suggestions of strange and highly picturesque landscape, and of native dwellers whose ways would be peculiarly primitive and interesting. But, after all, "Rhinns" is simply equivalent to the English word prongs, and a

glance at the map reveals its significance, for the land projects seaward to north and south like the clumsy horns of some great beast.

These Rhinns of Galloway are also called the Galloway Highlands, a name which for a stranger has a more definite meaning than the other, even if decidedly less fascinating. The scenery, however, is but a dwarfed imitation of the Scotch Highlands of the north, and is only worthy the title when comparison is made with the general low flatness of the rest of the Galloway country. The upheaval is never really lofty, rugged, or in any way striking, and indeed attains to nothing more than big, rounded swells. The grass-fields, pastures, ploughed lands, and the patches of woodland sweep away gently over the hilltops and down into the valleys, and, with the farmhouses, give the region an aspect of pleasant fertility.

On a long tramp over the Rhinns, that occupied nearly the whole of a summer day, I learned that the farmers were far from satisfied, in spite of the seemingly prosperous cultivation of the country. They complained because prices were low, and because a certain ogre of a landlord dealt hardly with them, and stripped their holdings of the best cattle to satisfy his claims.

“I kenned him,” said one man, “when he hadna ane ha’penny to rub against anither. But he hae

plenty noo. Hoo he gat his wealth I canna say, though 'tis tell't 'twas through a brither who robbed a bank in America. This brither was caught and pit in prison, but he had secretit the money, and when he was lat oot, he gat it and cam' hame, and he took to drink, and ane day jumped oot a twa-story window and was killed. Aifter that, the mon that's the landlord noo seemed to be sudden rich, and since then he hae bought a' the farmlands that coom in the market. But I'm no thinkin' his brither, gin he stole as they say, wad hae been lat loose if he hadna gi'en up the treasure he'd ta'en. The Yankees are too clever for that, are they not, noo?"

I had not the assurance he showed as to the cuteness of my countrymen in such matters, and had to confess that some of our rascals have a good deal easier time than they deserve, and that we were in the habit of dealing less severely with the gentlemanly law-breaker who, while in the employ of a bank, takes tens or hundreds of thousands, than with the petty thief whose methods are more vulgar, and whose stealings may amount to only a few dollars.

The farmer whose remarks I have reported had fallen in with me on the road, and we had been trudging along in company, but now we came to the lane which turned aside to his home, and we parted. A little farther on I overtook half a dozen children play-



THE POSTMAN

ing horse. They had twigs for whips, and gay-colored worsted reins which they said they had knit themselves. We got acquainted and kept on together for a mile or two. Sometimes they ran, sometimes walked, and sometimes stopped to make forays into the neighboring hedges or woodlands. They gathered flowers, and they watched the birds, and whenever a songster flew up from the clumps of furze and hawthorn growing on the roadside banks, they hastened to see if they could find a nest. Once they called me to them, and reaching into a cranny among the leaves and brambles of the hedgerow, took out an egg and a naked little bird for my delectation. I begged them to restore these treasures, and asked how they happened to find them. But they said, "Oh, we kenned that nest before."

I had noticed that the fields seemed very vacant, and I mentioned this to the children. They, however, declared it was not so always, and I should wait till harvest. Then all the Irish came over from their home country to help, and the farmlands were nearly as busy as the town.

"Are you all Scotch?" I queried.

"Ay, we are, sir!" they responded.

"And do you not wish you were Irish?"

"No!" said they, with emphasis, "we would die firrust!"

I suppose they had no idea how close was their racial relationship.

For many miles after leaving Stranraer I was on a road that kept along the heights, but at length I descended by a side way to the sea, and followed the windings of the shore northerly. At one point I sat down and rested while I chatted with a white-haired laborer breaking stone by the roadside. Again, I paused to speak with a boy who lay in the grass on the open, seaward side of the highway watching a group of cows pasturing on the patches of unfenced grassland next the pebbly beach. He said he brought the cows there daily from the farm three miles distant.

The afternoon was waning when I finally began to retrace my steps. Earlier, the sky had been clouded and threatening, but as I rambled back to the town the sun came out pleasantly warm, the haze in the air cleared, and I could see the green, hedgerowed hills beyond the bay.

On another day I went by train across the Rhinns to Port Patrick. From there the Irish coast is only a score of miles distant, and Port Patrick used to be the landing point for vessels from Larne and Belfast. Half a million pounds were at one time expended on the harbor, but the situation is too exposed, and the billows wrecked the great walls of masonry and tore apart the huge blocks of stone, even though they were bolted

together with stout sinews of iron. At the same time the waves heaved many big boulders into the harbor entrance that shut out all but the smaller craft, and now you find the ruined masonry abandoned to the will of the sea.

The place itself is a sleepy little village in a ravine that opens back inland between two steep slopes. It was named after Ireland's patron saint, who here first set foot on Scottish soil. Tradition relates that he came, not as ordinary mortals would, in a boat, but skipped over the twenty miles of water at a single jump. The marks of his feet where he landed were formerly plainly imprinted in a rock on the borders of the harbor, but this rock was broken up when that futile and expensive attempt was made to improve the port. St. Patrick did not find the people as hospitably inclined toward him as the Irish. Indeed, some of the Galloway men were rude enough to cut off the visiting saint's head. This treatment so offended him that he determined to leave Scotland, and he took his head in his teeth and swam across to his beloved Ireland.

Quite likely the details of his return to Erin may be mythical. Certainly no one at present residing in the port claims to have witnessed the exploit, in spite of the fact that the inhabitants of the region live to a very great age. One of the stories illustrative of Galloway longevity is this:—

“A stranger found a man of over threescore years and ten weeping by the roadside. He inquired the cause of this lamentation, and the old man said his father had just chastised him for throwing stones at his grandfather.”

After an hour or two by the shore, I followed a road up the hollow and on through a wood where the ground was sprinkled everywhere with bluebell clusters. Beyond the wood lay open hilltops, over which I went northward up and down the gloomy slopes for a long distance. It was a “coorse” day, as the Scotch say — the sky overcast with sullen clouds, and a chilly wind blowing. There was almost no protection on the uplands, for they were nearly bare of trees, and even hedgerows were infrequent. The crests of the hills were often wide wastes of heather and thorny whins, but lower lay broad farm fields. The cottages and farmhouses were far apart, and they so rarely had the softening touch of trees or shrubbery near them that they made the region look doubly lonely and desolate.

Most of the time I had no company save that of the curlews and peesweeps, with their wild squeaks and screams, and I was heartily glad presently to meet a postman coming out from a farmyard gate. He was going in my direction, and I accelerated my speed to keep pace with him. A canvas bag containing the mail hung at his side, and he carried a rubber cape on

his arm ready for use in case it rained. He had a long daily circuit to make, and said he walked a hundred miles a week. When we parted he went off by a path over the moorlands, and a little later I turned back toward Port Patrick, where I took the train for Stranraer.

I stayed while in Stranraer at an unusually pleasant and homelike temperance hotel. Mrs. Bruce, the good old lady who kept the house, was very kind and motherly, and I liked nothing better of an evening than to sit and talk with her in her clean little kitchen. She did not have a very high opinion of Stranraer. In fact, she did not hesitate to say that she believed it was the most drunken place in Scotland. The police court had no end of cases of intoxication to deal with, especially on Monday mornings, when the tipplers had to answer for their Saturday night carousing. Worst of all, the provost (mayor) himself was a man who was boozing most of the time, and not infrequently had to be locked in his room while the liquor craze was on. Stranraer was a resort for all sorts of people, and in summer they came in crowds. Mostly they were Irish, arriving from their native isle by the steamship line which makes this its haven, or they were Scotch town-folk down from Ayr and Glasgow on a holiday. Mrs. Bruce liked the Irish best. They were sure to be pleasant-spoken and courteous, while the Scotch were at times rude and troublesome.

My landlady formerly lived several miles from the town, out in the country, and there she for a long period lodged the ministers of the local church. She had a succession of six in her home, all young and all good enough in their way; but near acquaintance and knowledge of them had made it impossible for her to feel the veneration toward the cloth which she had been brought up to think was its due. Her previous intuitions were that a minister had something of the divine about him, and that there was a gulf fixed between him and ordinary folk. But of these six young men only one was at all consecrated to his work. With the others it was just a trade. They preached for a living, and she was afraid that was the case with nearly all ministers. She thought, too, that many of them did not thoroughly believe, or, at least, had little care one way or the other, about the doctrine which they preached. These six ministers who had been in her home were simply fun-loving young men, very human in their likes and dislikes, their faults and foibles; and, except for one, if they had happened to take up some other calling, it would have been all the same to them.

I was not a little regretful when the time came to leave my Stranraer hotel, yet the pleasantest memory is of the parting. I had a long railroad journey before me, and at the last moment it occurred to the landlady



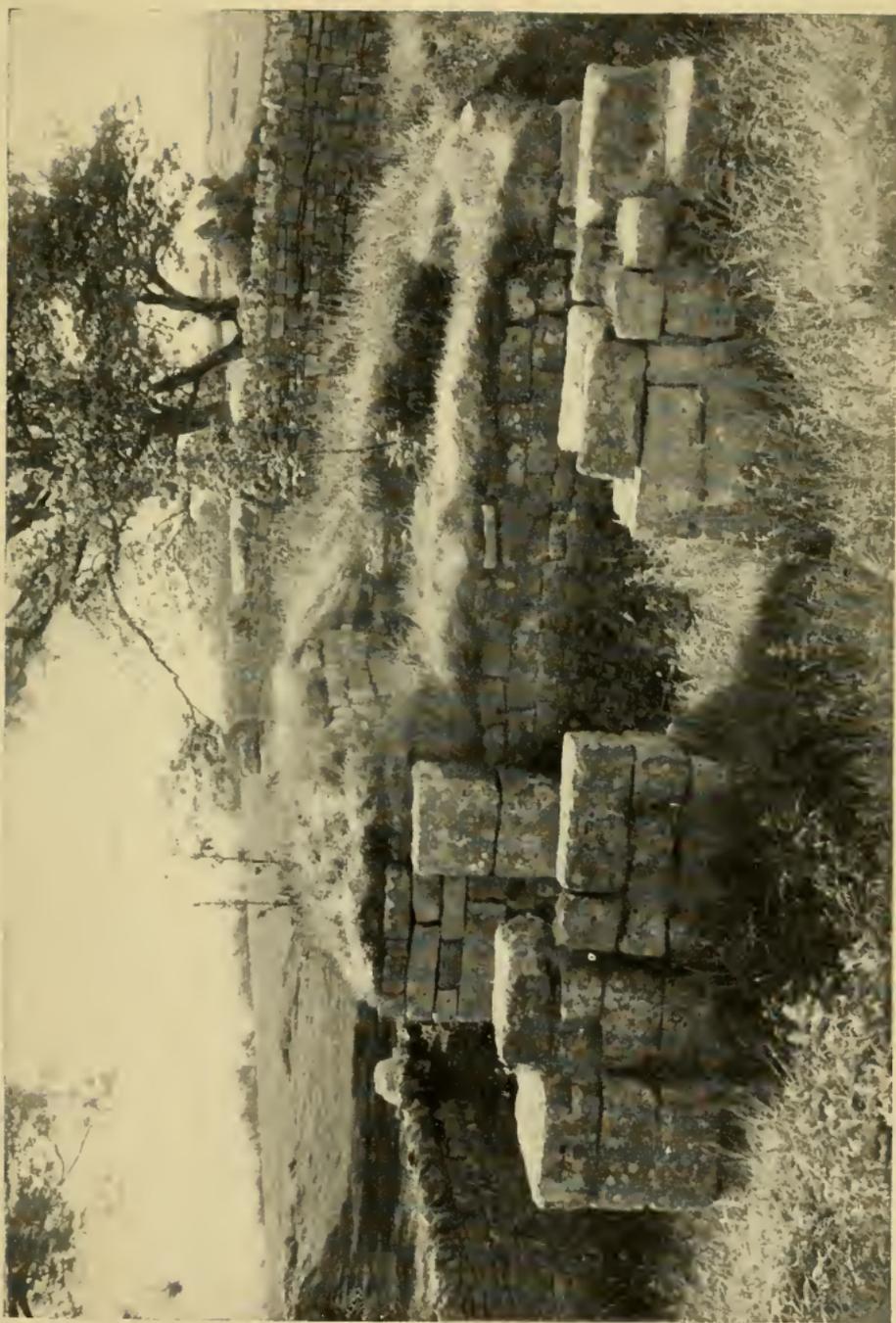
WOODLAND HYACINTHS

and her daughter that I ought to take along a lunch. This they hastened to put up, and they would take no pay, but bestowed it on me and saw me started away with as much apparent solicitude as if I had been a near relative.

My last sight of the land of heather was from a little place called Gilsland, eighteen miles east of Carlisle. From the Gilsland railway station I tramped off over the hills in search of a portion of the old Roman wall said to be in existence there — the wall that was built across the north of England to keep out the Scots and Picts. I found what I sought on a grazing upland where the peaceful sheep were feeding, as if the scene had always been pastorally quiet and its ancient martial aspect a fable. But the appearance of Scotland was everywhere different in the days of the Romans. There was little cultivated land and smooth pasturage. On the hills were vast forests of giant oaks, and the swampy valleys were overgrown with thickets of birch, alder, and hazel. Deer, wolves, and wild cats abounded. It was a difficult country to conquer, and the Roman troops were incessantly engaged in warfare with the wild northern tribes. Nor did they ever succeed in permanently subduing them, and when they withdrew after occupying Britain for three and one half centuries, the people of the north were unchanged in either language or habits.

A wall, to serve as a line of defence against the marauding Scotch, was begun about the year 120 by the emperor Hadrian. At first it was only an embankment of earth. When finished it stretched across the country for seventy miles, from the sea near Newcastle on the east, to the Solway Firth on the west. Soon after its completion the Roman frontier was pushed onward some fifty or more miles, and another wall was built, from the Firth of Forth at Edinburgh to the Clyde at Dumbarton. This marked the extreme northern limit of the empire. The strip between the two walls included most of the Scotch Lowlands; but it did not long remain in undisputed Roman possession, and presently the southern wall was again the defensive border line. When Severus came to Britain, he replaced the earth rampart with a wall of stone eight feet thick and twelve feet high. Along its course he established eighteen military stations garrisoned by cohorts of Roman soldiers, and at intervals of a mile were forts containing one hundred men each, while between each pair of forts were four watch-towers. Toward the close of the fourth century Roman dominion was reasserted over the Scotch lowlands, but the territory was shortly lost again, and a little later the Romans finally abandoned Britain.

Of the huge line of fortifications erected by the old Roman emperors surprisingly little remains, and even

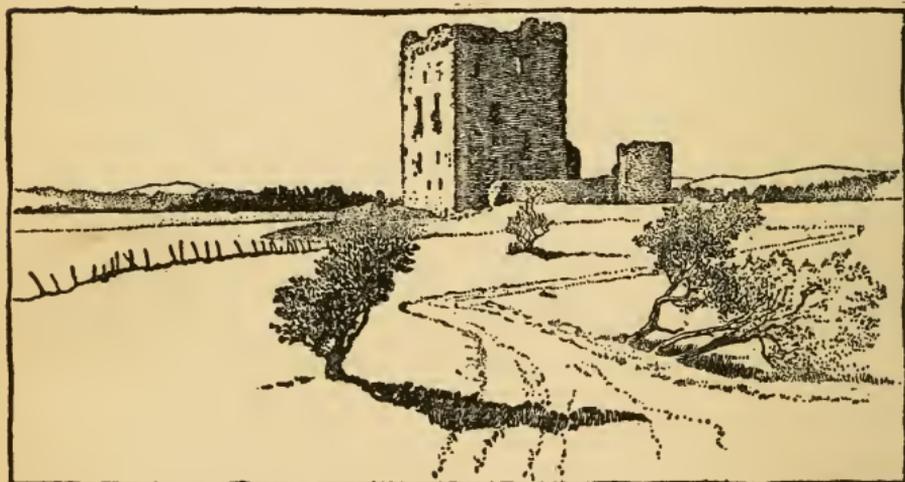


THE WALL OF SEVERUS

when the remnants are best preserved, as at Gilsland, they are not at all conspicuous. Here had been one of the old forts, and I had expected to see some massive ruins; but the reality was hardly more than an ordinary stone fence, and it was rarely so high that I could not overlook it. Beyond a narrow area on this hilltop the old-time upheavals of earth and stone ceased altogether, and the fragments to be found anywhere from coast to coast are few and insignificant. But, though to the eye the ruins were not at all imposing, when I recalled their age and associations, to have seen them seemed a notable experience. They furnished, too, an impressive example of time's power to level and disintegrate, and of the constant efforts of the elements to wipe out everything that lifts itself above the general level, though man, too, in this instance, has had much to do with the devastation.

Now I took leave of bonnie Scotland and journeyed southward into England, a section more beautiful, perhaps, to the eye, but certainly not one which appeals more forcibly to the imagination. I doubt if any land has the fortune to be as widely loved by those not native to its soil as this country of the heather. Its glens and hills, its woods and shrubby dens, its bracken slopes and moorland heights, its noisy streams and its mountain-girded lochs have won the affection of the whole English-speaking race. Then there is its

past, its days of heroism and romance, that live for us in history and song, and, more than all, in the magic pages of Sir Walter Scott. Finally, Scotland is the home of one of the most hardy, thrifty, brave, and warm-hearted races in the world.



A Castle of the Black Douglas

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